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PEACE AND SECURITY*

by Leonardo Paggi and Piero Pinzauti

The peace movement has suffered a major setback. The attempt to spread the idea that detente should be prior to security has not succeeded. The modernization of NATO was approved by European parliaments, within a climate marked by the revival of the Cold War. Does the lack of interest in a "reasonable agreement" between the two superpowers mean a revival of pro-war sentiment? A positive answer to this question would be a mistake.

In a polemic against the "E.P. Thompson school of disarmers," an editorial in *The Economist* noted that "all in all, this first round of the war for peace will probably be won by those who think the balance of terror is less terrifying than an imbalance of terror."[1] Sectors of the European peace movement have demanded both a freeze and unilateral disarmament. Such demands have been defeated by the conviction that it is precisely the catastrophe-like character of a possible nuclear conflict that makes the logic of equilibrium seem most promising in the pursuit of peace.

Therefore, on the whole, pacifists have been defeated by peaceful men who see the logic of equilibrium and security as the most efficient means to achieve peace. This defeat is largely due to the peace movement's failure to spell out an alternative idea of peace. Thus, beginning with E.P. Thompson's position we will discuss the peace movement's inability to deal with "security." Secondly, following Simone Weil, we will characterize the transition from a culture of security to one of peace. Then, Wittgenstein's notion of "natural reactions" will be proposed as a possible solution to the resulting epistemological problems. Finally, we will outline the nature of a non-violent movement (*à la* Gandhi) within advanced Western societies.

Thompson's Inconsistencies

So far, the peace movement's proposals have been largely guilty of circular reasoning to the extent that efforts to criticize the factors contributing to the threat of war utilize principles that presuppose those very factors. The need to build a broad front fighting for peace has resulted in a shrinking of analytical depth. Thus war, initially portrayed as typifying an entire civilization, ends up viewed as a cancerous growth on an essentially healthy body. In this regard, Thompson's writings exemplify a mode of reasoning shared by the best sectors of the European Left.

Hence, it is useful to examine his concept of "exterminism" and the interpretation of the role played by the theory of deterrence. Thompson begins

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*An earlier draft of this article appeared in *Problemi del Socialismo*, May-August 1984, pp. 59-125. English translation by Paola Ciardi and Richard Shryock.

1. "Anti-Nuclear Campaign: Over Its Dead Body," *The Economist*, Oct. 8-14, 1983, p. 11.

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with a correct critique of the Marxist theory of imperialism, which, given its analysis of the purely economic "origins" of war, cannot explain today's pro-war thrust stemming from the struggle between two opposed state systems.[2] Thompson argues that both in East and West, the military system eventually takes on "an autonomous self-generating thrust in its own right, which can no longer be reduced to the pursuit of rational interest." The phenomenon, however, can be controlled, since it does not extend to all of society. The problem is thus to re-establish that free choice, which has become increasingly eroded by technology: "military hardware implodes upon our political life."

Thus, for Thompson, exterminism can be checked by re-emphasizing politics. The traditional warning (from Clausewitz to Gramsci) that political power relations always end up on military terrain is forgotten. By separating and contraposing the political and military systems, the struggle against the bomb loses any connection with the problem of identiyfing the *system of violence* that produced the bomb. Commitment to peace takes on a typically fetishistic character: attention is focused exclusively on the destructive power of *things* (the weapons).

The theory of deterrence, which Thompson views as an apology for power, is consistent with a "system of exterminism." Once the military capability to destroy each other has been reached, further efforts by the superpowers to gain an advantage in strategic armaments or to restore a lost equilibrium are pure madness.

The theory of deterrence is meaningful only in its ideological role. Much like an addictive drug, deterrence brings about euphoria, inhibits recognition of the manifest consequences, and excuses the inexcusable.[3] The scenario for the explosion of a nuclear conflict is that of *Dr. Strangelove*. It is precipitated by demented generals infatuated with their monstrous toys through a perverse logic out of step with reason. The task of the peace movement thus is to cry out against this *madness*, and re-establish a link between international public opinion and a wise appraisal of reality. In claiming that the barbaric symbolism of arms has corrupted opposing cultures, Thompson sums up the theoretical and political weaknesses of the peace movement. When the system of armaments is seen as contingent on the respective cultures and the peace movement is posed as the true representative of common sense, what ends up being forgotten is the nexus of the peace debate: the connection between armaments and the logic of security.

This generates two fundamental weaknesses in the movement: 1) its embracing of political stances variously characterized as favoring the opposing side; and 2) its failure to articulate a positive idea of peace, i.e., its inability to go beyond a mere rejection of the "madness" of the bomb. Pacifists have failed to realize that most peaceful men who accept the logic of equilibrium subscribe to a specific notion of peace intrinsic to the culture of security, and

2. E.P. Thompson, "The Logic of Exterminism," *New Left Review*, 121 (May-June, 1980), pp. 3-31.

3. E.P. Thompson, *Zero-Option* (London: Merlin Press, 1982).

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that the culture of security, far from being a mere propagandistic expedient of power elites, is inextricably related to the very concept of the State.

The arms race, and the threat of total destruction that it entails, merely sheds greater light on the logical foundations of the entire culture of the modern State. Russian and American leaders are not raving madmen. Rather, they obey that inflexible rationality first codified in Hobbes' political philosophy. It is thus useful to go back to these texts to understand deterrence and the concept of peace embedded in it. The search for an autonomous space and for equal distance between the two superpowers requires, first of all, reflection on the nature of the State. Then, it must be asked whether it is possible to envision a notion of peace other than that proposed by the supporters of the balance of terror.

Security and Contractualism

All modern theories of the State focus on how to ensure peace, and take *self-interest* as the undisputed principle underlying any system of social relations. If "natural right" is understood, following Hobbes, as "the liberty each man has to use his own power . . . for the preservation of his own Nature, that is to say, of his own life,"[4] then the quest for a means to achieve peace is fundamental to any form of human interaction. The very principle of *exclusion*, universally assumed as the foundation of all theories of the State, implies a corresponding concept of peace: "for, although any man might say of every thing, this is mine, yet could he not enjoy it, by reason of his neighbour, who having equal right, and equal power, would pretend the same thing to be his."[5]

The search for peace thus originates from the need to guarantee self-preservation and represents a "measure of prudence." Here, peace is not defined as a value in and of itself but, rather, merely as a potentially advantageous state of affairs. The first and most important law of nature claims "that every man ought to endeavour Peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of war."[6] In other words, the quest for peace does not go beyond the primary and fundamental right to defend one's self and one's property by any means possible to the exclusion of all other considerations.

The overcoming of a man's general drive to possess everything is determined by a mechanism based on rational calculation that induces each to accept a system of reciprocal limitation on liberty. If the first law of nature entails the pursuit of peace, the second views the contract, i.e., "the reciprocal transfering of rights," as the means to achieve peace. It is necessary "that a man be willing, when others are so too . . . to lay down this right to all things, and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself."[7] To the extent that it is based on limiting, and not

4. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London, 1965), p. 66.
5. Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive or the Citizen*, ed. Sterling Lamprecht (New York, 1949), pp. 28-29.
6. Hobbes, *Leviathan, op.cit.*, p. 67.
7. *Ibid.*

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transcending, the system of reciprocal exclusion, *peace* as *contract* is a *right* that never becomes a *duty* — a law that never becomes a *moral obligation*. Fear of destruction has been transformed into a rational search for peace without a moral imperative dictating it. Thus, peace as contract remains within the framework of violence: *covenants without the sword are but words.*

This is accepted through self-interest by the "tame" or "peaceful" man as a result of a situation of equilibrium between powers capable of maintaining peace. In relation to the contract, peace is, by definition, an armed peace and thus inexorably linked to security. As such, the deterrence mechanism is an inevitable result, logically entailing the maintenance of balance between countervailing forces. Once again, Hobbes clearly links those concepts which typify ordinary international relations.[8]

Therefore, the resumption of the arms' race as the preliminary condition for negotiating from positions of strength is not an aberration explainable in terms of politicians or generals gone mad. Rather, it follows from Hobbes' rationalist analysis as it unfolds from the premise of the isolated individual. The sequence peace-security-deterrence-equilibrium is irrefutable as it unfolds from the principle of self-preservation of the atomized individual. On the other hand, the system of internal relations of each single state also extends to inter-state relations. The mechanism generating "the sword of justice" also generates the "sword of war." For Hobbes, sovereignty can be defined only through the joint management of the two swords.[9]

Peace, the Sword, and the Delegation of Responsibility

This notion of a peace entrusted to a contract guaranteed by the sword implies the delegation of responsibility and representation: *alienation* (from the viewpoint of the individual) or *expropriation* (from the viewpoint of the state) of individual responsibility. The contract requires 'that, in those necessary matters which concern peace and self-defence, there be but one will of all men."[10]

This process of alienation of the will means that the very notions of good and evil be subject to centralized control. They become the exclusive prerogative of constituted authority.[11] Thus the peaceful man abdicates his own moral responsibility in order to preserve peace, and the State becomes the sole arbiter of good and evil. All theories of the State subsequent to Hobbes

8. *De Cive or the Citizen, op.cit.*, p. 64: "But first, it is plain that the consent of two or three cannot make good such a security; because that the addition but of one, or some few on the other side, is sufficient to make the victory undoubtedly sure, and heartens the enemy to attack us. It is therefore necessary, to the end the security sought for may be obtained, that the number of them who conspire to a mutual assistance be so great, that the accession of some few to the enemy's party may not prove to them a matter of moment sufficient to assure the victory."

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 129: "Before there was any government, just and injust had no being, their nature only being relative to some command . . . . Legitimate kings therefore make the things they command just, by commanding them, and those which they forbid, injust, by forbidding them."

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have sought to limit sovereignty but have not questioned this authoritarian mechanism resulting from the connection between property, the corresponding system of rights, and political guarantees necessary for their maintenance.

A rather different formulation of the delegation of responsibility is found in Spinoza: "No one can be forced to transfer to others his own natural right, that is, his own capacity to speak freely and express his own judgment about something. As a consequence, we deem violent that power which is exercised over conscience."[12] When Carl Schmitt saw in this call for freedom of conscience the source of an inevitable crisis of the State, he failed to recognize that, instead, it represented that principle in its most mature form. The exclusive rationality of possession, from which the State originates, also produces an infinite variety in the private sphere. Spinoza states explicitly that freedom of conscience is not *subversive*; rather, it can fully develop "without prejudicing the peace of the state, on the condition that it confers to constituted authority the faculty for deciding what has to be done and does not challenge anything in its decisions."[13]

The multiplicity of notions of good and evil independent of the mechanism of the delegation of responsibility upon which the State rests, is not subversive precisely to the extent that they do not question the exclusive rationality of possession. In this sense, they can also go beyond the sphere of mere opinions, which for Spinoza remains the condition of their compatibility. On the other hand, the very demand for an intimately consensual notion of power subsequently made by Locke, including the hypothesis of civil disobedience, is accompanied by an even more explicit formulation of the connection between State and private property, here understood in the broad sense of "lives, liberties and estates."[14]

But it is in Hegel, above all, that a reaffirmation of the will to possess as the fundamental principle of the State is combined with the fullest development of individual subjectivity. Here the "prodigious strength and depth" of the contemporary state is unequivocally found in the tendency of "the principle of subjectivity to progress to its culmination in the extreme of self-subsistent personal particularity." In other words, the fullest development of individual particularity never comes into conflict with the universality of the State. This is the cause of the stability of the State in its most developed form, which Hegel also contrasts with its Platonic counterpart in which "subjective freedom does not count." Hegel thus seems to be describing the confrontation between the two forms of State that have confronted each other in this century under the heading of "democracy" and "socialism." On the basis of a shared affirmation of the principle of exclusion, we find the full development of the rights of

12. B. Spinoza, *Trattato teologico-politico* (Turin, 1972), p. 480.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 483.
14. John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government,* ed. C.B. MacPherson (Indianapolis: Hacket Publishing Co., 1980), p. 66.

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individuals as well as the persistence of an "immature" State in which "particular determinations have not yet attained free self-subsistence."[15]

At any rate, the significance of the Hobbesian link between peace and security, based on the principle of the will to possess, has been reasserted during the 1970s in the debates concerning the theory of the state. The counterposition between *Minimal State* and *Welfare State* is possible only because both notions accept the "state of nature," typical of traditional contract theory. The confrontation is reproduced anew between those theories seeking to extend State sovereignty (Rawls) and those seeking to minimize it (Nozik). Once again the link between exclusive rationality and protection is reaffirmed as central. Having established the principle of protection, it is difficult to reject its extension from the realm of property to that of well-being.[16] Minimal State and Welfare State, protection and distribution, obtain within a common *continuum.* The culture of security re-establishes its principle of identity in that it moves from the realm of military confrontation to that of social welfare.

Beyond the Logic of Blocs

Far from being an expression of "madness" or a "process of corruption," security is the constitutive principle of the modern State. Today, the most significant historical manifestation of the culture of security is the existence of a bipolar system. Yalta brings to its ultimate fulfillment the logic of security by making it the organizing principle of all world relations. For the first time in history, the confrontation between "democracy" and "socialism" extends the principle of State-rationality on a global scale. Within this context, what is the meaning of the peace movement's demand for transcending the logic of blocs? Is it possible to seek a pure and simple return to a plurality of power centers given the system of security resulting from the drastic "simplification" of 1945? Yes, but only in the sense of a further proliferation of autonomous nuclear power centers. No, in the sense of a regression from the logic of security, in terms of nuclear deterrence.

The transcendence of bipolarism through the emergence of a multiplicity of centers with autonomous nuclear deterrence is historically possible. The peace movement's call to transcend the logic of blocs in the name of self-determination ultimately follows this trajectory. The multiplication of rights only entails a proliferation of autonomous power centers and, therefore, of deterrence. Within such a context it is impossible to envision the cultural space equidistant from each bloc that is necessary for the success of the peace movement. Thus, it is necessary to develop a critique applicable to both systems which, unlike Thompson's "exterminism," would capture their common identity.

15. G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.H. Knox (Oxford, 1952), pp. 161, 280.
16. On this issue, see D. Wood, "Nozik's Justifications of the Minimal State," *Ethics*, 88 (April 1978), p. 3.

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Simone Weil: From Contract to Obligation

In contract theory, right never translates into moral obligation. Man is naturally inclined to seek peace but, as Oakeshott observes, a "bridge" is never built between this and moral action.[17] Law exists independently of ethics, which is therefore assumed to consist of purely subjective opinions. Along with a total omission of what have been called by Durkheim and Parsons "the non-contractual elements of the contract," a global ethical relativism emerges where values appear only in relation to a force able to impose them. According to Hobbes, the legitimate king can make something "just" merely by ordering it to be so. Given such a situation, peace cannot cross the threshold of non-war, i.e., it cannot go beyond security. The possibility that peace be considered a value and not merely an existing state of affairs lies outside of this relativism. Simone Weil's work seeks to go beyond this predicament. Recent interpretations of her work, however, have not adequately captured the underlying goals of her often tortuous reasoning. Her thought, as it unfolded between 1933 and 1943, is almost obsessed with the need to find an escape from the self-reproducing mechanism of violence. In this sense, an ethical motivation constitutes both the beginning and the end in a quest that, even if in contradictory fashion, ultimately represents the most complete attempt to date to provide positive content to the concept of peace.

"Let us not begin another Trojan war" is the cry of alarm launched by Weil in 1937 in the face of a multiplication of conflicts that do not have clear objectives, i.e., conflicts whose initial reasons have gradually lost their meaning. Subsequently, these conflicts are not so much fed by the manifest stake ("Helen's ghost") as by the need to justify the sacrifices and sufferings already endured. Weil sought to understand why violent political oppositions remain captive within the same logic and the same culture. Recalling her 1932 trip, Weil writes how communist and fascist workers, arguing in the streets of Berlin, were often surprised to discover that they wanted the same things. Their oppositions stemmed neither from different desires nor from abstract ideas about the fate of capitalism. According to Weil, even the clash between democracy and Nazism cannot be described as a confrontation between civilizations. Thus, only the result of the war (in other words, the bare logic of power relations) can decide between truth and error, between right and wrong. According to Weil, "you cannot, therefore, say that Hitler's victory over France was the victory of a lie over a truth. An incoherent lie was vanquished by a coherent lie. That is why, as their arms gave way, people's spirit did likewise."[18]

Hitler only took to its logical consequences the constitutive principles of a culture of force that was first codified during Roman civilization and subsequently came to characterize all of the Western world. Hence, the catastrophe

17. M. Oakeshott, *Rationalization in Politics and Other Essays* (1962), p. 263.
18. Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots*, (New York, 1952), pp. 241-242.

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was already prefigured by European diplomacy in its search for an accord.[19] The system of relations between major nations on the Continent before 1939 is reproduced after 1945 on a world scale within the context of bipolarism. A peace based on the system of security generates a vicious circle that is bound, in the long run, to destabilize that very security. Thus, it is not surprising that deterrence eventually displaces coexistence. The exacerbation of international relations in the 1980s, after a decade of relative calm, should not be seen as an exception but rather as a phase within a cyclic process. The trajectory which, sooner or later, ends in catastrophe, is the same which produces equilibrium.

The question for European diplomacy up to 1939 was how many concessions could be made to Hitler's expansionism in order to avoid war. Weil thought this to be an "irresolvable problem." There is no clear line of demarcation between what is legitimate and what is illegitimate because the vicious circle of security always translates all efforts to achieve peace into the language of conflict.

In 1940, "force" reappears in her *Iliad, Poem of Force,* but transposed on a theoretical level. The vicious circle that undermines the possibility of a peace entrusted to the system of security has become a destiny of force that dominates the world, quite apart from the various motives put forward to justify it. Such is the nature of force. "Its power to transform men into a thing is double and it cuts both ways; it petrifies differently, but equally, the soul of those who suffer it and those who wield it."[20] The two parties in struggle are the mere manifestations of the same self-legitimating substance.

But force, as a relation that transforms into things its constituting subjects by making them "deaf and mute," permits the existence of attitudes that are exactly its opposite: "the resulting whole would be dismal monotony were there not, sprinkled here and there, luminous moment, brief and divine moment in the souls of men."[21] The emerging tension between different thrusts can be resolved only by examining Weil's critique of Marxism: It is "a system according to which the relations of force that define the social structure

19. On this issue, Simone Weil's political writings contain several noteworthy passages: "In France's opposition to German hegemony, I see no other future than the vicious circle inherent in the very notion of a European balance of power. If each nation cannot allow the other to gain hegemony in Europe without sacrificing its own security, the only course is to exert a certain hegemony oneself — which obliges the other to do strive to wrest it away, and so on. The idea of security contains an internal contradiction. On the plane of force, where the problem of security is posed, there is no other security possible than that which stems from being a little stronger than the people across the way, who then lose their own security; therefore, to make the organization of peace dependent on the achievement of a general security, as France has so long done, means proclaiming the impossibility of peace. Even if the vicious circle inscribed within the doctrine of European balance does not necessarily lead to war, it does in any case lead to a growing militarization of civil life." This is a conceptual analysis which can be integrally transferred from the historical sphere of "European balance of power" to the current one of "peaceful coexistence." See Simone Weil, *Ecrits historiques et politiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), pp. 285-286.

20. Simone Weil, *Intimations of Christianity among the Ancient Greeks* (London, 1957), pp. 44-45.

21. *Ibid.,* p. 46.

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entirely determine both man's destiny and his thoughts. Such a system is ruthless. Force counts for everything there; it leaves no hope for justice. It does not even leave the hope of conceiving justice in its truth, since all that thoughts do is to reflect the relations of force."[22] Weil's objection here centers around the possibility of liberation, given the rigor of such a Machiavellian account of society. For Weil, Marxism is a Centaur. It stems from the attempt to weld together humanism and scientism, the proclamation of the ideal and the exaltation of the principle of the rigorous efficacy of history, as expressed in the total acceptance of the laws of politics. This is both the source of its power as historical agent and its fundamental inconsistency.

How can one link the action of a political subject, the workers' movement, acting in conformity with demands for a redistribution of income and power, according to the rules of the game of the prevailing mode of production, with a theory which seeks the transition to a different mode of production? According to Weil, "when force changes hands, it still remains a relation of stronger to weaker, a relation of dominance. It can go on changing hands indefinitely, without a single term of the relation being eliminated."[23]

Along with the inconsistencies of historical materialism, Weil also rejects the claim that social reality defines the individual. This leads to the hypothesis that "good" can be defined outside relations between you and me. Ethics is thus located beyond the boundaries of the world. When the continuum of force is broken, God's presence is said to be responsible. The reintroduction of a wholly privatistic vision of the individual coincides with a revival of a traditional religious perspective.

Weil is forced to place the "good" outside the world precisely because she ultimately embraces the radically Machiavellian vision of society proposed by historical materialism. But how is it possible to have an idea of force acting in the world without making reference to the good, also acting in the world? If the conflict between force and the good occurs between two elements, one of which (force) is of this world and the other (the good) outside it, how is it possible to introduce justice into our thinking about the world?[24]

The hypothesis of transcendence thus originates as a corollary of the inability of conceiving of the tension between justice and force as existing in the world, i.e., within society. At any rate, Weil's theoretical efforts make an essential contribution to a critique of Marx. This has been neglected in the different exegeses of her thought, since it cannot be reduced merely to a critique of industrialism, bureaucratism or the idea of progress. Although the first phase of Weil's philosophical reflection is still embroiled in syndicalism and an essentially Weberian analysis of capitalism, the outcome goes far beyond the merely sociological dimension.

22. Simone Weil, *Oppression and Liberty* (Amherst, 1973), pp. 171-172.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
24. P. Winch, "Comments on Mister Daly's Doing Good and Suffering Evil," in W. Mays *et al.*, *Linguistic Analysis and Phenomenology* (London, 1972), p. 288.

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Weil and Marx

It is no accident that the most forceful references to Marx are found in her last London writings concerned with the connection between law and exchange which facilitates the passage from contract (and security) to obligation (and peace). "At bottom, Marx's materialism only expressed the influence of this society upon him; his weakness lay in becoming himself the best instance of his own thesis concerning the subordination of thought to economic circumstances. But in his best moments he rose above his weakness. At such times, materialism horrified him, and he would stigmatize it in the society of his time. He discovered a formula impossible to surpass when he said that the essence of capitalism lies in the subordination of subject to object, of man to thing. The analysis which he made of it from this point of view is of an incomparable vigour and depth; today still, today especially, it is an infinitely valuable object for meditation."[25]

How does the critique of the subordination of man to object unfold in Weil's analysis? Buying and selling labor means reducing it to a thing. Subsequently, however, Weil seems to employ the Marxian vision of the wage as a mode of being of labor totally internal to the dynamic of capital to critically restrict the validity of the labor movement's traditional commitment to redistribution. Two notions of justice emerge: a redistributive justice based on right, stemming from the existence of exchange and of the market (Rawls); and a justice as the realm of the definition and realization of the good (Plato).

Here Marx and Plato converge. The Platonic need for the absolute generates a radical critique of law. Marx's conceptual framework thus becomes the sturdiest support and the culmination of Weil's entire critique of the domination of force as the basic element of civilization: "The notion of right is connected with that of division, exchange, quantity. There is something commercial about it. . . . The right can only be upheld in the form of a demand, and, once this form is adopted, either there is force to back it up, or else it is ludicrous."[26]

By remaining on the level of redistribution and "bargaining," the labor movement accepts the logic of right of the 1789 bourgeois revolution. In this sense it represents a "sinister farce." Although it unfolds a radical critique of the existing mode of production, it remains completely within the context of force: "by its very nature, right is dependent on force." Thus the scenario is that of the contract. A distribution of income and power most favorable for a given social group is negotiated on the basis of relations of force. The opposition between free market and planned economy, between market and state, remains entirely within the culture of exclusion typical of the contract.

The peculiarly Marxian identification of exchange and right translates into the critique of democracy beginning with the denunciation of the false hypothesization of consensus in liberal democratic theory. Within this framework,

25. Weil, *Oppression and Liberty, op.cit.*, pp. 164-165.
26. Simone Weil, *Ecrits de Londres et dernières lettres*, 2nd edition (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), p. 23.

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consensus is posited as a value in itself, independent of any content. Once again, then, one has to rediscover the essence of force underlying surface appearances. Something injust does not change its nature or become legitimate merely by the fact that it is willed by a majority.[27] Only what is just is legitimate. The difference in political systems of the two superpowers does not affect the identical immorality of the language of violence they use. The critique of the subordination of man to things cannot lead to the acceptance of legitimacy as a set of procedures, as Luhmann argues today. Once again, Weil leads us back to a typical Marxian "landscape." Equality and freedom are "idealized expressions" of exchange, having as their presupposition a system of production that "already in itself implies compulsion over the individual, since his immediate product is not a product for him but only *becomes* such in the social process since it *must* take on this general but nevertheless external form."[28]

Through Marx, Weil has discovered the connection between *exchange, right* and *force*. From the political identification of the "vicious circle" characterizing the logic of security, we have come back to a philosophical critique of the culture of the contract. Yet, a fundamental question remains: if only what is just is legitimate, what are the criteria for identifying what is just? Weil tries to answer this by articulating a concept of obligation in explicit opposition to contractualism: "The object of any obligation, in the realm of human affairs, is always the human being as such. There exists an obligation toward every human being for the sole reason that he or she is a human being, without any other condition requiring to be fulfilled. . . . This obligation is not based upon any *de facto* situation, nor upon jurisprudence, customs, social structure, relative state of forces, historical heritage, or presumed historical orientation. . . . This obligation is eternal. It is coexistensive with the eternal destiny of human beings. . . . Duty toward the human being as such — that alone is eternal. This obligation is an unconditioned one. . . it is not founded on anything at all. . . . It is recognized by everybody without exception in every single case where it is not attacked as a result of interest or passion. And it is in relation to it that we measure our progress. The obligation is only performed if the respect is effectively expressed in a real, not a fictitious, way; and this can only be done through the medium of Man's earthly needs."[29]

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27. *Ibid*, p. 127. This is not merely an abstract problem, but a hot political issue. In the Oxford debate between Thompson and Weinberger, the U.S. secretary of defense, Weinberger argued that the moral superiority of the U.S. as a world superpower relative to the U.S.S.R. is based on the fact that American policy is conducted with the consensus of the governed. The support of puppet governments by the U.S., he argued, however base they may be, rests on decisions that can be reversed at any time by voters. Weinberger, however, could not answer a student's question: "Do you think an immoral act becomes acceptable because we have the choice to do it or not? If you are beaten and tortured by those regimes, is it a more moral act because Congress approves of it instead of some general?" See *International Herald Tribune,* Feb. 29, 1984.
29, 1984.

28. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 248.

29. Weil, *Need for Roots, op.cit.,* pp. 4-6.

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Here is an attempt to establish fundamental principles for a culture radically different from the dominant one. If the fulfillment of "man's earthly needs" implies only obligations, without concomitant rights, then the concept of exchange, typifying the world of contract, loses its meaning. A family of concepts is replaced by another, which has its epicenter in the idea of obligation and its end point in a positive idea of peace no longer guaranteed by the equilibrium of power relations.

Within this new scenario the exchange of products is entirely free and exclusively geared to the satisfaction of the needs of the subjects involved. The rationality of the exchange does not lie in finding a counterpart, but in the fact that the subjects are "human beings as such," who spontaneously recognize that certain "earthly needs" must be satisfied. The rationality of the exchange stems from these needs. By producing for the satisfaction of one's own needs, A satisfies also B's needs, which represent the only motives for which A provides his products. Thus, "earthly needs" as such come to represent reality.

The reciprocal exclusion assumed by contract theories having as their constitutive principle the notion of a "state of nature" is replaced by a recognition that confers to the idea of peace an immediate content. The way in which we characterize this "recognition" will allow us to identify it with the abovementioned notion of obligation. The problem now is to establish whether this notion and its normative use, as present in Weil's work, can be justified independently or whether it must be attributed to her personal religious experience.

Ethics and Meaning

How does obligation as a normative criterion actually work? Weil equivocates on this question. She recognizes that the uniformity of force is torn, thus opening up space for the emergence of attitudes that are its exact contrary, but she interprets such manifestations as a sign of "grace." Further light can be shed on this problem by reference to contemporary philosophical debates. The first question is the following: if knowledge is internal to all forms of life and therefore inextricably linked with the existing system of passions and interests, how is it possible to posit a truth above this plurality of viewpoints? In her "reading" of the world, Weil says that meanings stemming from experience "take possession of my soul only to forsake it and be replaced by others. Are then some better than others? Are some truer than others? Where can one find a norm?"[30]

Habermas raises an analogous issue when he writes on the intertwining of knowledge and interest in everyday life. His answer is to hypothesize an "ideal linguistic situation," i.e., a transcendental precondition for any possible communication. Such an ideal state, however, is not utopian, as it is partially present in every individual linguistic act. Thus, the "ideal linguistic situation"

30. Simone Weil, "Essai sur la notion de lecture," *Les Etudes philosophiques*, January-March 1946, p. 18.

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serves as the standard when evaluating any given "distortions" of communication. The absolute must be an intrinsic element in history. As such, Habermas is able to answer the historicist claim that the normative criterion is necessarily relative. At the same time, however, when Habermas lays out the four elements that characterize the "ideal linguistic situation," the normative criterion becomes identified with a perfect liberal democracy characterized by a system of guarantees that confers upon individual participants in this communication the maximum equality, freedom and truth.[31] Habermas' "ideal linguistic situation" thus describes a pluralism that ensures an identical system of rights for all.

The "distortion of communication" that can be identified on this basis only concerns abuses of authority occurring in the functioning of institutions bound with the culture of the contract. His consensual theory of justice never gets beyond the procedural dimension and thus leaves unanswered the question of content.[32] From Habermas' reflection on the relation between communication and truth one can then draw two lessons: 1) the normative criterion must be a constitutive element of practical everyday life or, in other words, internal to history; 2) it must not be identical nor congruent with the existing economic-institutional system. Habermas' argument rests on the recognition of a connection between language and society, yet there is no distinction between phenomena of exclusion and phenomena of recognition produced in a given society.

Hegel, Marx and Wittgenstein

Hegel posits the irreducibly social character of the individual on a completely different level. In the *Phenomenology*, different self-consciousnesses can exist only by "mutually recognizing one another."[33] The meaning of this

31. See J. Habermas and N. Luhmann, *Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1971), pp. 101-141, and J. Habermas, *Communication and Evolution of Society* (Boston, 1979), p. 65.

32. For a critique of Habermas' position, see R. Kilminster, "Theory and Praxis in Marx and Marxism," in G.H.R. Parkinson, *Marx and Marxisms* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 174ff. On the logical inconsistency of this theory, see P. Petit, "Habermas on Truth and Justice," in *ibid.*, pp. 207-228. For a critique of Habermas' formalism, see the contribution of S. Lukes, 'Of Gods and Demons: Habermas and Practical Reason," in *Habermas: A Critical Debate* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982), pp. 134-148. Lukes focuses on two difficulties present in all of Habermas's work. The first concerns the identity of the participants in the undistorted communication. The second concerns what they are supposed to agree on. Hence Habermas's formalism, which is a consequence of the split between communication and purposive action. As language and practical activity are intrinsically bound, Habermas's separation of the two necessarily implies that communicative action is transformed in a purely procedural normative rule. That is why the dominant form of practical activity becomes the uncriticized content (exchange-contract) of such a formal statement. It is not by chance that Karl Otto Apel, who shares with Habermas the same kind of separation, ends up supporting deterrence as the logical outcome of his argument based on the distinction between communicative rationality and strategic action. On this last point, see K.O. Apel, "L'etica della responsibilità nell'era della scienza," *Il Mulino*, 297 (January-February 1985), pp. 47-73; and K.O. Apel, "The A Priori of Communicative Community and the Foundation of Ethics," in *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy* (London, 1980).

33. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford, 1977), pp. 110-112. For a discussion of the affinity between Hegel and Wittgenstein concerning the unity of language

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recognition lies in the unity of "being-for-other and being-for-self" within the concept of praxis. This means that "the *labor* of the individual for his own needs is just as much a satisfaction of the needs of others as his own, and the satisfaction of his own needs he obtains only through the labor of others."[34] In this case, recognition takes on the role of a transcendental principle which permits the unfolding of the meaning of experience.

The identity established by Hegel between the social reality and recognition is further developed in Marx's concept of labor. Here, recognition is the absolute condition of any possible experience in so far as the objectification of labor and the implied subjectification or humanization of nature can occur "only for social man."[35] The rationality which permeates the distribution of products among society's members concerns the needs of the other, and not rights or money, only in so far as the products are released because others need them. Thus, we have come a long way from the inadequate critique of Habermas' "ideal linguistic situation." Within this context, the force that permeates all social relations in the culture of contract is exposed at its core, i.e., the prevarication of the "rationality" of money and right over the rationality of needs. On one side, we have the uniform extension of rights which culminates, as T.H. Marshall understands it, in the universalistic welfare state; on the other, we have a perspective that goes beyond these rights.

It could be objected that there is a vicious circle in attempting to make a particular practice, that of recognition, the foundation of any other possible experience, since it uses as the explanatory principle what in turn must be explained.[36] In this regard, it is useful to consider the anti-metaphysics of the later Wittgenstein with its radical dismissal of the issue of "foundation" in the way he approaches (a) the unity between language and praxis, and (b) the irreducibly social character of such unity.

With respect to (a), "Practice gives the words their sense"[37] since "language is a characteristic part of a large group of activities."[38] As to (b), by rejecting the possibility of a "private language," Wittgenstein can assume that only a socially shared practice is the precondition of meaning: " 'obeying a rule' is a practice. . . hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately'."[39] Starting from

and reality and the nature of philosophy, see D. Lamb, *Language and Perception in Hegel and Wittgenstein* (Avebury, 1979).

34. Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, pp. 110-112, 211-213.

35. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. M. Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1964). Specifically on pages 135-144, the realm of the social as recognition clearly plays the role we have indicated. If this is the case, it is absurd to read the "young" Marx in humanistic terms.

36. If this circularity can be avoided, a unity is established between normative criteria (recognition) and facts (experience). Popper criticizes the way this unity is expressed in Hegel's philosophy. According to Popper, Hegel unifies social facts with normative criteria (and thus the ideal with the real, the good with the right, and force with power), thus encouraging totalitarian modes of thought and action. See K. Popper, "Facts, Standards and Truth," in the addenda to *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. 2 (London, 1974), pp. 394-395.

37. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, trans. P. Winch (Oxford, 1980), p. 85.

38. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* (Oxford, 1970), p. 2.

39. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford, 1968), para. 202.

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these premises (also accepted by Marx and Hegel), Wittgenstein avoids the vicious circle by demonstrating the existing internal connection between "primitive reactions" and "linguistic games": "Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination."[40] Similarly, "the origin and the primitive form of the language game is a reaction: only from this can more complicated forms develop. The language — I want to say — is a refinement, 'in the beginning was the deed'."[41] The agreement in these reactions constitutes the precondition for "right" and "wrong" in obeying a rule, so essential for the very existence of language.[42]

Given the existence of an agreement in these relations, we can understand each other. However, such agreement does not precede language but appears along with it. As Rhees writes, "it is a common way of taking the expressions of the language. They are common reactions within the course of language — not to anything there might have been before the language or apart from it."[43]

Natural reaction in Wittgenstein seeks to emphasize the aspect of acting and of praxis intrinsic to language: "the essence of the language game gave us a practical method (a way of acting)."[44] In this sense, language and praxis are correlated; neither is prior to the other. Thus, Wittgenstein captures the irreducibly social aspect of concept formation. This means not only, as Malcolm says, that "without this kind of natural agreement, there could not be language"[45] but also that reactions must be, at the same time, reactions of someone in relation to someone else. Given similar circumstances, every man — independently from others — reacts in the same manner; moreover, this concordance exists also as a way of relating to others in group life.[46]

40. L. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* (Oxford, 1969), para. 475.

41. Wittgenstein *Culture and Value,* p. 31. Peter Winch, in his introduction to Simone Weil's *Lectures on Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1978), elucidates the affinity between the latter and Wittgenstein's view on the role that "natural reactions" play in the formation of concepts. On this problem, see also N. Malcolm, "Wittgenstein: The Relation of Language to Instinctive Behavior," in *Philosophical Investigations*, 5:1 (January 1982); and Peter Winch, "Im Anfang war die Tat," in I. Block, ed., *Perspectives on the Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (Oxford, 1981).

42. This is the central point of Wittgenstein's polemic against the possibility of a "private language." See on this issue: Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 258; Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy* (London, 1958), p. 32; and B.F. Armstrong Jr., "Wittgenstein on Private Languages: It Takes Two to Talk," *Philosophical Investigations*, 7:1 (January 1984). With this, Wittgenstein showed the logical impossibility of explaining the formation of concepts on the basis of rationalist or empirical arguments. On this problem, see also D.W. Hamlyn, *Experience and the Growth of Understanding* (London, 1978), especially chapter 6; and D.W. Hamlyn, "What Exactly Is Social about the Origins of Understanding?" in the collection *Perception, Learning and the Self* (London, 1983).

43. Rush Rhees, *Discussions of Wittgenstein* (London, 1970), p. 57.

44. L. Wittgenstein, "Cause and Effect: Intuitive Awareness," *Philosophia*, 6:3-4 (September-December 1976), p. 421.

45. N. Malcolm, "Wittgenstein," p. 16.

46. Wittgenstein (in his *Philosophical Investigations*, part 2, section 4, para. 178) affirms that "My attitude toward him is an attitude toward the soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul." Peter Winch devotes his article "Eine Einstellung zur Seele" (In *Aristotelian Society: Proceedings 1980-81,* vol. 81) to this passage in order to criticize the rationalist version of the fundamental concept of the "human person" and of the way in which we react towards other people. He says "that our *un*reflective reactions are part of the primitive material out of which our concept of a human person is formed and which makes much more sophisticated reflections possible" (p. 8). However,

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If this is the case, such a social relation or praxis which binds human beings to one other, as an inescapable condition of meaning, can only be described in terms of recognition. The existence of a conceptual structure shared by the members of a community implies a mutual reference and mutual satisfaction of needs, desires, etc., characterizing practical life.[47] On the contrary, if one emphasized shared reactions of an exclusionary type as being at the roots of civilization, the end result would be the impossibility of language, nonsense, and a logical contradiction. Therefore, the conditions of meaning can only be described in terms of recognition, so that recognition and language are correlated and originate simultaneously. In this way, the vicious circle is overcome.

With respect to this type of recognition, one could object that the welfare state in its most advanced form gives a certain currency to this objective. Free assistance provided to all implies that the system has taken charge of people's sufferings and needs. However, here we find a paradox — produced by actual historical circumstances — that a community-oriented rationality has become mediated by the language of right, which is in its very nature exclusionary.[48] In contrast, Wittgenstein's scenario presupposes the immediacy of response to the need of others, thus leaving no room for either the mediation of money or that of representation.[49]

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neither Winch nor Malcolm, in analyzing the social role, comes to our conclusion concerning the distinction between recognition and exclusion.

47. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914-1916* (Oxford, 1969), p. 79 [published along with *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London, 1961)]. Wittgenstein considers ethics as "the condition of the world, like logic" but, as distinct from logic, "ethics cannot be put into words." Hence, "it is impossible to speak about the will in so far as it is the subject of ethical attributes" (*Tractatus*, p. 79). This theme reappears in his subsequent writings. On the other hand, in his mature works, Wittgenstein focuses on sociality as concordance in natural reactions and in action, something completely absent in the *Notebooks* and in the *Tractatus*, and develops in a radically different manner the role of ethics as a "condition of the world," making it the constitutive element of the multiplicity of languages and meanings. From this viewpoint, M. O'C. Drury seems to be correct when he says of the works after the *Tractatus* that "they all point to an ethical direction" ["Some Notes on Conversations with Wittgenstein," in *Ludwig Wittgenstein, Personal Recollections,* R. Rhees, ed. (Oxford, 1981), p. 97]. Of differing opinion is J. Schulte who, in "Wittgenstein and Conservatism [*Ratio*, XXV:1 (June 1983)], argues that Wittgenstein always denied that one could produce a theory of ethics or that ethics could be explained or taught (Wittgenstein expresses all this in his 1930 *Lecture on Ethics* and in his conversations with Waismann from the same period). This is true, but Schulte does not distinguish ethics as a system of values which characterizes a subject *already* endowed with language (and of which one ought to be silent in as much as it is part of the inexpresssible) from ethics as reciprocal recognition, implicit in the concordance between reactions and action, without reference to which any description of the conditions of meaningful experience would be logically impossible. Unlike in the *Notebooks*, where ethics is a "condition of the world" in the sense that it would exist "even if there is nothing living outside of me" (p. 79), in later works ethics not only can exist, as any other language, only for man in society, but it is itself necessarily connected to the concordance in practice and to the formation of concepts. It is in this second sense that we will be considering it.

48. In this sense, the welfare state represents an ambiguity and is condemned to remain so. On the one hand, it is the culmination of the logic of security and protection; on the other, it anticipates a rationality which inherently contradicts that logic.

49. Much has been said within Marxism concerning the distribution of products, as Marx put it, "according to needs," without, however, grasping its full ambiguity. In the more common version — not considering for now those versions which place it within the context of abundance,

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"You must bear in mind that the language-game is so-to-say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable). It is there — like our life."[50] Hence, a fundamental part of primitive reactions and linguistic games are linked to those daily practices (e.g., friendship, love, family, game, art) which, in so far as they contain the logic of recognition, allow us to identify the normative criterion through which we can understand the opposition between the rationality of needs and that of right and force. Hitherto, all theories of liberation have emphasized redeemers, parties and intellectuals because they ignored the possibility of a different culture immediately given in the daily experience of the common man. According to Wittgenstein, there is no new rationality to be discovered or invented; one does not solve problems by producing new experiences but rather by consolidating what was already known to us.

All previous interpretations of Wittgenstein, seeing his philosophy as a therapy for language-related "mental cramps," have overlooked the fact that in returning words from a metaphysical to their everyday use, he vindicates the value of all the natural reactions of everyday life that connect ethics and meaning. The possibility of knowing the world is entrusted to the immediacy and transparence of a relation constantly overwhelmed and mediated by civilization. Wittgenstein's critique of metaphysics does not challenge only the errors of philosophers but also and above all the distortion in the formation of meanings that occurs within an exclusionary culture. As von Wright concludes: "If philosophical problems are symptomatic of language producing malignant outgrowths which obscure our thinking, then there must be a cancer in the *Lebensweise,* the way of life itself"[51] since language is intrinsic to it.

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which seems to us unrealistic — it is never specified *who* decides what needs are to be satisfied and *who* carries out the distribution. It does not necessarily follow that the subject of distribution is, once again, an entity (society/State) outside of the individual. This is not the Marxian version. It seems that the latter intends distribution "according to needs" — in line with the recognition we referred to, namely, that A gives his product to B simply because B needs it. Even the notion of a "plan" for production and distribution of products assumes a double meaning. According to the first, it is accomplished on the basis of exclusion and of right (by the party/State). In the second, however, it is achieved on the basis of recognition and thus by the community of individuals themselves.

50. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty, op.cit.,* para. 559.

51. G.H. von Wright, "Wittgenstein in Relation to his Time," in *Wittgenstein* (Oxford, 1982), p. 207. This article is important because it finally removes Wittgenstein from the sterile ivory tower in which he had been confined by analytic philosophy, revealing the essentially critical character of his philosophy. On the other hand, von Wright does not seem to grasp the way in which the Wittgensteinian critique of culture operates, so that his claim that "there must be a cancer in the way of life" appears completely gratuitous: in what sense is Wittgenstein's philosophy capable of supporting this? In other words, von Wright does not succeed in grasping the distinction between recognition and exclusion within Wittgenstein's version of social reality, in as much as it is a condition of meaningful experience. For an interpretation of Wittgenstein as a "conservative," see J.C. Nyiri, "Wittgenstein's Later Works in Relation to Conservatism," in B. McGuinness, ed., *Wittgenstein and His Times* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 44-69. A convincing critique of this article is found in J. Schulte, "Wittgenstein and Conservatism," *op.cit.* Here, among other things, the author shows how the famous passage from *Philosophical Investigations* — that philosophy "leaves

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The "cancer" mentioned by von Wright can now be easily identified. The historical form of exclusion at the base of our civilization, i.e., exchange and right, tends to destroy the conditions of meaningful experience in so far as it denies recognition. This fundamental dimension of life — social praxis as unity between man and nature — which is decisive for ethical and meaningful life is upset and becomes the locus of consensus and violence. As Wittgenstein points out, it offers "the unimpressive spectacle of a crowd whose best members work for purely private ends. . . ."[52]

If this is the cancer within "our way of life" and our language, then we have no choice but to remove it. As Wittgenstein states in a very perceptive passage: "The sickness of a time is cured by an alteration in the mode of life of human beings, and it was possible for the sickness of philosophical problems to get cured only through a changed mode of thought and of life, not through a medicine invented by an individual."[53] If human beings want to "disentangle" themselves from their "philosophic confusions," they must "rearrange their entire language." According to Wittgenstein, they can do this only through an act of rebellion: "Therefore only those can escape who live in accordance with an instinctive distrust of the language — not those whose whole instinct is to live in accordance with *that* herd which has created this language as its *particular* expression."[54]

Non-violence and Change (Gandhi)

The identification of ethics and meaning has brought us to locating a principle that needs not be grounded and through which the notion of obligation acquires an *ontological* dimension. This starting point allows us to find the "communitarian" content of politics. More precisely, it allows us to break out of the monopoly exerted by the language of politics over problems of the community. The existence of a system of meanings that cannot be challenged without introducing logical inconsistencies is connected to a system of social relations or "agreements" which constitute the unity from which division can be derived, the consensus which makes dissent possible. At this point, the culture of peace must come into conflict with what has been defined as the non-contractual dimension of the contract (Parsons). In other words, it must question the claim of right to be the sole explanatory element of social reality. On the other hand, the contradictions inherent in the attempt to explain individuals' political behavior solely in terms of self-interest have already been demonstrated.

If the sword is necessary to enforce compliance, it does not follow that contracts are mere words if not endowed with a sword. The contract generates the power of the ruler. This power rests on the trust which those who enter into

everything as it is" — means only that philosophy by itself cannot provide methods and recipes to change the status quo. But, Schulte adds, that "has nothing to do with the *generic* recommendation not to interfere with the state of existing things" (*op.cit.*, pp. 72-73).

52. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 6.
53. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics* (Oxford, 1967), p. 57.
54. Cited in G.H. von Wright, "Wittgenstein," *op.cit.*, p. 209.

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the contract confer on the ruler by allowing him to exercise force. Hobbes thinks that trust is only an effect and cannot be a source of power. The possibility of using force is given by the existence of power, which, in turn, is inconceivable without obligation or commitment. "The power to command derives from the habit of obedience Before there can be political power, there must be rules that men follow, not from fear of government, but from other motives."[55] Having shown the untenability of the Hobbesian model, we can draw some consequences by trying to envision collective action or "human conduct" based on its non-violent component. In other words, human behavior should no longer be seen in terms of *processes* but rather of *practices*,[56] on the basis of a representation of social reality that is no longer contraposed to the individual acting on the basis of a system of values and choices.

Envisioning a non-political or non-violent language, facilitating the expression of the community's problems, inevitably leads us to reconsider Gandhism. Before doing so, however, one must ask whether Gandhism is inextricably bound with a national liberation movement rooted in the past. Interpretations of his work over the last three decades point in the opposite direction. As has been incresaingly emphasized, Gandhism should not be seen merely as a direct confrontation with the central tenets of a Western culture during its period of maximum expansion, since it also has affinity with the European and American tradition of political thought.

The convergence of the tradition of "scientific socialism" with the dizzying process of modernization encompassing ever expanding portions of the world between the 1920s and 1960s leads us to look to Gandhi's work for a project of liberation diametrically opposed to that of Lenin.[57] The particularity of Gandhi's philosophy relative to the mass movements of passive

55. J. Plamenatz, *Man and Society*, vol. 1 (London, 1963), p. 153. On the logical inconsistencies in the Hobbesian model, see A. MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York, 1966). MacIntyre notes: "The Hobbesian contract is the foundation of social life in the sense that prior to the contract there are no shared rules or standards; indeed, the story of the contract functions as some kind of explanation of how men came to share social norms. But any exchange of words, written or spoken, between men which it would be appropriate to characterize as a contract or agreement or making of promises can only be so characterized in virtue of there already existing some acknowledged and shared rule according to which the use of the form of words in question is understood by both parties to be a *binding* form of words" (p. 136). He goes on to say that "Hobbes makes two incompatible demands of the original contract: he wishes it to be the foundation of all shared and common standards and rules; but he also wishes it to be a contract, and for it to be a contract, there must already exist shared and common standards of the kind which he specifies cannot exist prior to the contract" (p. 137). In other words, the postulated priority of violence *vis-à-vis* the agreements on which human co-existence rests is indefensible. Violence and war can be thought of only *within* and *on the basis* of non-violent and peaceful social relations made possible by free acceptance of the norm. The notion of *authority*, which is intrinsic to and correlated with that of *society*, separates itself from and becomes fully autonomous from that of the *state*.

56. M. Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 97.

57. R. Fulop-Miller, *Lenin and Gandhi* (London and New York, 1927) is interesting above all for its comparative perspective. He writes, for example: "Like two prophets, they stand at the opening of the twentieth century. If we listen to them, their age will be the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the world. They desire to lead humanity to salvation in different ways and they point in opposite directions, each with the same gesture of most profound conviction. Lenin regarded the unlimited — though only temporary — use of violence as the means for bringing

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resistance that developed in India during the interwar period is illustrated by his persistent and recurrent distinction between "the non-violence of the weak" and the "non-violence of the strong." In his prison writings, when Gramsci referred to Gandhism as "a mattress against bullets,"[58] he depicted a new form of mass struggle shaped by the necessity of coming to terms with the enemy's overwhelming military superiority. Influenced by the relation of Marx and Machiavelli, Gramsci was unable to catch the significance of Gandhism's exceptional challenge in reproposing the indissoluble tie between ethics and politics during that time when humanity was about to live through the barbarism of World War II.

If the non-violence of the weak is a *policy*, i.e., a political strategy based on a certain constellation of power relations, the non-violence of the powerful is connected with a *creed*, i.e., with a vision of the world, a conception of man and society, which is no longer directly connected to a given historical situation. The doctrine of *satyagraha* links non-violence to a search for *truth* in social relations, attaining its greatest heights in the counterposition between the *selfish* and the *selfless*. According to Gandhi, only an act "directed to the welfare of others, done without desiring any return for it" can be defined as moral; contrary to appearancess, morality is a pre-condition for the survival of humanity.[59] In a piece entitled "Ethical Religion," written in 1907 when the entire Anglo-Saxon world was caught up in social Darwinism, Gandhi asserts that Darwin's scientific theory itself demonstrates that survival in terms of sheer force is inconceivable, i.e., it cannot be separated from the fundamental role which altruism retains in the preservation of the species.[60]

Beginning with the relation between ethics and society, we can transcend the typical Weberian distinction between the ethics of responsibility and that of ends, between the world of political realism, in which all conflicts can be negotiated, and the world of value, in which oppositions are unmanageable.[61] Gandhism thus appears as the most coherent repudiation of the "double standard" or of the split between acts and values.[62] This search for a moral principle as a foundation of practical action, however, does not justify any simple hypothesis about a "reconstituted" and reunified society. The *satyagraha* can stand up as a philosophy and a "technique" of social change in so far as it assumes the existence of conflicts and inequalities as essential elements of

about an ideal world order, whereas Gandhi is trying to reach the goal by an absolute rejection of all violence. Lenin tried to free humanity by complete mechanization, Gandhi by repudiating machinery in principle."

58. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. V. Garratana (Turin, 1974), p. 748.

59. Mahatma Gandhi, *Satyagraha* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1951), p. 47.

60. Mahatma Gandi, *Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, ed. Shriman Narayan, vol. 4 (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1968), pp. 25-27. The spirit of sacrifice for one's offspring or for the group is fundamental to survival of the race. In this sense, morality, i.e., a disinterested and completely altruistic behavior, is an irreplaceable component in the continuity of a species.

61. On this issue, see G. Sharp, *Gandhi as Political Strategist* (Boston, 1979), pp. 235-250.

62. On this important aspect of Gandhi's thought, see R.N. Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York, 1973), pp. 58-73.

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reality. In fact, only by beginning with the existence of conflict, it is possible to explain that relation between truth and non-violence, which is at the core of *satyagraha*. "For truth, judged in terms of human needs, would be destroyed, on whichever side it lay, by the use of violence, [thus] non-violence, or *ahisma*, becomes the supreme value, the one cognizable standard by which true action can be determined."[63]

The ethical relativism of social relations cannot be avoided through the unilateral proclamation of the validity of the *standard* but rather through persuasion and a non-violent resolution of inequality, requiring not compromises but agreements. Means manage the ends, and it is no longer possible to distinguish between truth and non-violence. Altruism as the "truth" of social relations can permeate the sphere of social interaction solely through (a) non-violence, and, therefore, (b) a change in the essence of individuality, or, more precisely, of the single individual. The primacy of *duties* over *rights*, of *obligations* over *claims* upon which the non-violent perspective rests, means self-regulation and sef-government.[64] In Gandhi's philosophy, the individual has undisputed primacy to the extent that the possibility for change can only take concrete form through the individual's free and spontaneous acceptance of the truth.

Gandhi's individualism, consciously opposed to its liberal counterpart, is based on the conviction that the single individual can be completely at the service of society only through free choice. In Gandhi's words, "Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. . . . Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member."[65]

The non-violent action projects an idea of change which is totally *non-political*, in the sense that it develops entirely outside that circuit of exchange, distribution and representation intrinsic to the culture of contract, within which the historical experience of the labor movement has been located. This model is the polar opposite of the Marxian one because it views ethics as the only terrain upon which a break and innovation with respect to the mode of production and the dominant cultural models can be *realistically* proposed. The critique of violence as the form intrinsic to this mode of production has two significant theoretical consequences.

First there is a rejection of scientism. A theoretical consequence of Marxism's privileging of politics is its acceptance of the materialist and scientific model. All theories of distribution based on the inverse relation between wage and profit correctly emphasize that a distributive justice is the necessary result of favorable power relations. It is thus clear why Marxism dismisses all human

63. J.V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1958 and 1965), p. 25.

64. The entire Gandhian interpretation of *Swaraj* tends to link national independence to the development of the individual's capacity for self-government. On the precedence of duties over rights, see, in particular, Gandhi, *Selected Works, op.cit.*, vol. 6, pp. 440-441 and 442-443.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 438-439.

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activities related to ethics and will as ideology and appearances. McIntyre argues that the social sciences must employ a terminology which avoids any reference to intentions, purposes or motives for action. This is because all these presuppose reference to the beliefs of actors and thus to their "choices," their value systems and their ethical standards.[66] In other words, it is essential for the very existence of a social science that any reference to the intentional character — or values — of everyday life be eliminated, thus allowing force to dominate reality.

This perspective, however, is doomed: the notion of class consciousness and class struggle inevitably re-introduces in the economic-political world those intentions, purposes motivations, values, and beliefs that a social science must exclude. There have been no historical transitions from one civilization to another that have not proceeded through a dialectic of *consensus* and *refusal*. Similarly, there are no institutions whose existence does not depend on the consensus of those concerned. The very constitution of the economic and political world necessarily involves consciousness, will and value.[67]

Moreover, a critique of violence as intrinsic to the mode of production allows the overcoming of the traditional dialectic between utopian thought and the critique of utopia. Utopian thought projects in the millennium the possibility of that relation of recognition which has always been the condition of any possible experience. The critique of utopia in both its conservative and revolutionary versions invokes force as the sole possible scenario in human history. While conservative anti-utopianism rejects the possibility of achieving the good in the millennium, Marxism allows for this possibility only if some objective forces can be located to bring it about. Gandhi's idea of a non-violent society avoids this polarity. It points to an objective for which one can work *here* and *now*. Each individual can adopt the way of life of the future "without having to wait for others to do so,"[68] because non-violence has always been the force which "holds together society."[69] The real problem is to bring about its "extension" to the totality of human relations and, most of all, to those which are currently regulated by the state and politics. "Consciously or unconsciously, we are acting non-violently towards one another in daily life. . . . I claim that even now, though the social structure is not based on a conscious acceptance of non-violence, all the world over mankind lives and men retain their possessions on the sufferance of one another. If they had not done so, only the fewest and most ferocious would have survived. But such is not the case. Families are bound together by ties of love, and so are groups in the so-called civilized society called nations, only they do not

66. A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London, 1981), p. 80.
67. On the irresolvable contradictions within which Marxism is trapped, see A. Ryan, "Is the Study of Society a Science?" in D. Potter, ed., *Society and the Social Sciences* (London, 1981), pp. 31-32.
68. Gandhi, *Selected Works, op.cit.*, vol. 6, p. 260.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 472.

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recognize the supremacy of the law of non-violence. It follows, therefore, that they have not investigated its vast possibilities."[70]

Only on the basis of this primordial "gravitational force" of non-violence can one understand how violence in the world ultimately encounters certain limits that contain its destructive force. The fact that, despite all wars in history, the world continues to exist provides the most compelling argument for the role played by non-violence in society. Coexistence and peace are the actual *continuum* upon which human existence unfolds: "History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. Two brothers quarrel; one of them repents and re-awakens the love that was lying dormant in him; the two again begin to live in peace; nobody takes note of this. But if the two brothers, through the intervention of solicitors or some other reason take up arms or go to law — which is another form of the exhibition of brute force — their doings would be immediately noticed in the press, they would be the talk of their neighbours and would probably go down in history. And what is true of families and communities is true of nations. There is no reason to believe that there is one law for families and another for nations. History, then, is a record of an interruption of the course of nature. Soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history."[71] Analogous to the way in which Wittgenstein locates a certainty not subject to challenge, Gandhi sees recognition and the spontaneous reaction embedded in daily life as the precondition for all subsequent human relations, the foundation that needs no intellectual grounding, the raw material which can be distorted, violated, denied, but never suppressed. Wittgenstein writes that a mother who shrugged her shoulders or shook her head upon hearing the cries of her newborn would be viewed as showing signs of madness and not of a skeptical attitude.[72] Similar types of activities are identified by Gandhi as evidence for the existence of an ethic of recognition which, because it is identifiable at the *ontological* level, can be *extended* from the family to large collectivities.

Given this perspective, the evolution toward a non-violent society can be measured in terms of the extension of self-government, i.e., the withering away of politics. Thus, according to Gandhi, "By its very nature, non-violence cannot 'seize' power, nor can that be its goal. *But non-violence can do more; it can effectively control and guide power* without capturing the machinery of government."[73] The premise behind Gandhi's public actions can thus be traced back to his conviction that even the most tyrannical government can survive only on the basis of a consensus.[74] The State as machine and the State as violence can function through coercion only because there is some type of consent. Non-violent action can affect the political balance (even if it departs from the

70. *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.
71. *Selected Works,* vol. 4, p. 171.
72. Wittgenstein, *Cause and Effect, op.cit.*,, p. 414.
73. Gandhi, *Selected Works,* vol. 6, p. 446.
74. *Ibid.*,, p. 183. "That government of the people is possible only so long as they consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed."

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logic of violent settlements of antagonisms typical of politics)[75] in so far as it is exercised at the level of the community, from which the political sphere cannot be divorced. This rediscovery of the *non-political* foundation of politics, however, opens the way for its eventual elimination. "Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power, because there is no State."[76]

With his advocation of "enlightened anarchy," i.e., the withering away of politics brought about by the growth of individual responsibility, Gandhi harkens back to Thoreau's classic statement that the best government is the one that governs least. Gandhi, however, did not advocate uncritically the minimal state position. When confronted with the evident growth in state power, he expressed concern with the fact that "although apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress."[77] The redistributive effects of the welfare state are dangerous to the extent that they impair, through some type of paternalism, the moral development of the individual as a self-governing subject. Thus, there is a direct correspondence between the growth of individual morality, the spread of non-violence, and the withering away of the state. "A society organized and run on the basis of complete non-violence would be the purest anarchy."[78] The withering away of the state proceeds hand in hand with the spread of a rationality of recognition, characterized by a service toward society that does not require any compensation.

This intimate correlation between non-violence and the withering away of politics constitutes a radical break with the traditional idea that the individual is unable to bring about historical change. A transformation of subjectivity, freely achieved, is the only possible yardstick to gauge historical change. In

75. The relation between the majority and the minority present in liberal democracy is for Gandhi inherently violent and is therefore not capable of binding the minority in any way (see Gandhi, *Selected Works,* vol. 6, pp. 461-462). In an argument supporting the Gandhian thesis of the violent character of the liberal democratic state, Bondurant refers to Kelsen's theory of right. See Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence,* pp. 218-219.

76. Gandhi, *Selected Works,* vol. 6, pp. 436-437.

77. *Selected Works,* vol. 6, p. 438.

78. *Ibid*, p. 436. In this sense, for Gandhi European democracy is "the negation of democracy." See Bondurrant, *Conquest of Violence, op. cit.*, p. 174. More generally, it is important to understand the peculiarity of Gandhi's "anarchism" when considering Bondurant's comparison of it with the Proudhonian interpretation of a non-political associationism. Here society is conceived as a "vast network of exchange" and as a collection of individual rights. *Pacta sunt servanda:* it is this type of reciprocal recognition (*the multualité*) of individual rights that allows the possibility of an emancipation from the state. We are therefore in a universe diametrically opposite that of Gandhi. On one side, the logic of *sacrifice*, of recognition without compensation. On the other, the logic of self-interest and of the contract. It is not necessary here to reiterate Marx's critique of Proudhon as an advocate of a socialism based on a system of exchange.

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effect, "non-violence cannot be preached, it has to be practiced."[79] One could argue, with Wittgenstein, that this is part of the *unsayable*, i.e., something that can only be *demonstrated* and spreads not via *explanation* but only through *imitation* and thus would require *training*.[80] Since the individual is both subject and object of change, there is no truth or consciousness that must be brought from outside.

This view of non-violence obviously goes well beyond the confines of a national liberation movement. Gandhi was explicit in this regard: "I, however, feel that fundamentally the disease is the same in Europe as it is in India, in spite of the fact that in the former country the people enjoy political self-government. . . . It seems to me, therefore, that sooner or later the European masses will have to take to non-violence, if they are to find their deliverance."[81] Thus, a comparison with Western socialist culture is inevitable. Here, once again, the identity of means and ends constitutes the basis for a rethinking of the transcendence of capitalist society. "The more we treat socialism as a game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us."[82] Neither redistributive measures nor the abolition of private property can be achieved through state violence. The alternative method envisioned by Gandhi is that of "conversion": "By the non-violent method we seek not to destroy the capitalist, we seek to destroy capitalism. We invite the capitalist to regard himself as a trustee for those on whom he depends for the making, the retention and the increase of his capital."[83] Once again, in the economy, as with the state, there is a consensus that makes possible the capitalists' position of force. Thus, the task of non-violent action is to bring to light the internal connection that links the capitalist to the will of his employees. Gandhi's proposal for a "fiduciary administration," counterposed to expropriation in that it seeks to retain for the collectivity "the gifts of a man who knows how to accumulate wealth,"[84] entails the spontaneous acknowledgement by the wealthy individual of his relation of dependency that subordinates him to collaboration with the poor.

Is this an unattainable utopia? Evolutions in human nature in a non-violent direction have frequently occurred both for individuals and over the course of history. The problem is to bring about a non-violent movement rendered possible when awareness spreads that non-violence, rather than constituting

79. Gandhi, *Selected Works*, vol. 6, p. 171.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
81. Mahatma Gandhi, *Non-violence in Peace and War* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1942), vol. 1, pp. 32-33.
82. M. Gandhi, *Non-violence in Peace and War, op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 65.
83. Mahatma Gandhi, *Towards Non-violent Socialism* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1951), p. 150. Gandhi is explicit on the issue of using the state as an instrument for developing different social arrangements: "It is my firm conviction that if the State suppressed capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the evils of violence itself and fail to develop non-violence at any time. The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence" (*Selected Works*, vol. 6, p. 369). Gandhi thus employs explicitly Marxist and Leninist definitions of the State to draw opposite conclusions.
84. Gandhi, *Towards Non-violent Socialism, op.cit.*, p. 20.

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something confined to individual experience "is definitely an attribute of society."[85] The realization of redistributive justice, i.e., application of the ethical ideal of non-possession in the sphere of the economy, is only one element of the general problem of extirpating violence through an evolution toward a peace based on recognition.

Three Perspectives on War and Revolution (Jaspers, Sartre, Aron)

The best work in the postwar European debate on the connection between war and revolution demonstrates that Gandhi's perspective remains the most coherent theoretical approach to violence in the nuclear era. Although published more than a quarter century ago, Karl Jaspers' *Die Atombombe und die Zukunft des Menschen* remains an important contribution. Its inconsistencies and contradictions are representative of an orientation that is still widespread, despite the distance that we have come since the Cold War when this book was written. Jaspers' reflection on the problems of the nuclear era is from the start torn between two irreconcilable requirements. On the one hand, there is the conviction that the threat of war cannot be eliminated within traditional politics. Jaspers observes that within such boundaries, no transition is possible from a state of simple *coexistence* to one of *cooperation*. Without such a transition, however, the minimal need for a mechanism of reciprocal control over armaments cannot be realized. On the other, there is the belief that the Western system of freedoms is threatened by a powerful tendency toward totalitarian government, against which one must defend oneself at all costs.

The problem of how to avert the destruction of humanity thus contradicts that of how to avoid the destruction of a way of life worth living (i.e., how to halt the trend toward totalitarianism). The objective of peace, with its inextricable ethical dimension, thus contradicts the imperative of security (from which follows Jaspers' rejection of German neutralism and his support for Adenauer's policies and American hegemony).

His evaluation of Gandhi reflects this tension. Gandhi is seen as the clearest example of how politics can be made fully aware of its limitations so as to give way to the moral dimension standing above it and, moreover, how the destructive force of violence can be arrested. Yet, the Gandhian experience is portrayed as the outcome of a particular situation and hence not generalizable, especially not in a historical context characterized by nuclear confrontation between two powers that embody principled polar opposites, i.e., freedom and totalitarianism.

In other words, for Jaspers non-violence runs into a limit when violence takes the form of a radical denial of freedom, as it has in totalitarian systems. In the nuclear era, Gandhi's position would thus entail surrender in the confrontation with the Soviet Union, which inevitably turns pacifism to its advantage.[86] Here Einstein exemplifies the ideal behavior: his pacifism, which was

85. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

86. Karl Jaspers, *The Future of Mankind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 36-40.

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above suspicion, did not keep him from pressuring Roosevelt to support the development of the atomic bomb once it became apparent that Nazi scientists were close to achieving this goal.

Jaspers is aware that the nuclear era confronts humanity with a set of problems transcending that cost-benefit logic that has historically characterized Western politics. The nuclear threat increasingly underscores the decisive role of the *suprapolitical* or ethical element that has always been present, albeit in different ways, in society. This element alone can result in continued human survival. "No man who has left a lasting imprint on politics has ever acted out of purely political motives. No politics suited to men has ever been self-sufficient." Here Jaspers rejects the possibility of even conceiving of the autonomy of politics, and makes it dependent on some "other": "To us, the *suprapolitical* element is manifested in the ethical idea and in the valor of sacrifice. They can provide the conditions for the achievement of world peace — conditions impossible to create by treaties and institutions, but growing, rather, out of man's other side which the observer of tangible reality never perceives."

Jaspers tries to distinguish between the intellect, characterized by the contract and politics, and reason, operating in a community that has realized total freedom and full individual self-determination. He also spells out the relation between peace and change, stressing at the same time that the change in question concerns not "socio-political processes" but rather individuality, "the way of thinking."[87] Yet, this injection of *ethos* into history is seen as something that is not destined to disrupt existing political arrangements but rather to resuscitate them.

For Jaspers, the contrast between ethics and politics must result in a "new politics," which must explicitly embody this rational and communitarian dimension. In contradistinction to political man (in the traditional sense) Jaspers provides a portrait of the "rational statesman": "Politicians of vital elan may achieve and realize their power by extraordinary skill and daring. They seem like tigers in their unshakable presence of mind, inhibited only by self-discipline imposed by their goal, which is power as such. To them, the people are a mass to be manipulated so that it will obey, work and keep quiet. The Statesman, on the other hand, is guided by moral-political ideas in the framework of a historic situation. His existence convinces and forms a nation. He does not produce imitators but successors."[88]

Actually, Jaspers never managed to clearly spell out what this new and superior unity of ethics and politics entails. The attempt to reconcile them (albeit at a level of civilization superior to the existing one) derives from the fact that, in his definition of the content of reason (i.e., the form of ethical thought), Jaspers seeks to go beyond the idea of a "free communication" — an idealized *Öffentlichkeit* that ultimately becomes identified with an ideal-typical

87. *Ibid.*, pp. 187-208.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 238.

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model of liberal democracy (not very different, in the final analysis, from Habermas' "undistorted communication"). In other words, the critique of the violence of totalitarian regimes rests on a liberal-democratic *standard*, which does not question the principle, solemnly reaffirmed by Jaspers, that "against force, resistance by force is necessary if one is unwilling to become somebody's slave."[89] The new morality thus can coexist with an almost ideological support of the Atlantic Alliance: "Friede allein durch Freiheit."[90] This freedom, understood as free flow of information, becomes the criterion for identifying an ethical standard that can and must be defended with arms!

Jaspers' attempt to reconcile ethics and politics within a never clearly spelled-out "new politics" does not go past the previously discussed nihilism: violence is the defense of a determinate viewpoint, of a value that remains ungrounded and therefore gratuitous. Jaspers' contradiction is typical among the European intelligentsia: recognition of the supra- and non-political character of peace coupled with the idea that this peace can be reconciled with an unquestioned acceptance of the polarity between liberty and totalitarianism, between state and market. From this stems the necessity of an alignment that is inevitably ideological and contradicts the (initially) acknowledged superiority of peace. Jaspers' position typifies the contradictions resulting from a reflection on peace and, more generally, the role of ethics when the basis of contractualism is not openly challenged.

During the 1960s, the European Left revived the debate concerning the cathartic role of violence. The Soviet model (armed revolution, one-party state and planned economy), which seemed to have been defeated in advanced industrial societies in the West after 1945, gained a new lease on life in colonial and formerly colonial countries. At the same time, it gained political and intellectual influence even within capitalist metropoles. Sartre's preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* is representative of the fascination the Third World held among the Western intelligentsia. Re-reading today this hymn to the liberating potential of violence, it is all too easy to point out the path that led from the battle of Algier to the massacres by Libyan terrorists or Khomeini's firing squads (not to mention the swift conversion of the North Vietnamese army of liberation into an occupying force). What is more important here is to retrace the theoretical argument that supported this political position.

"Violence, like Achilles' lance, can heal the wounds that it has inflicted."[91] The colonized recovers from his neurosis and from the destruction wrought by colonialism by expelling the colonizer with arms in hand. Notwithstanding his sardonic quips against Sorel's "fascist utterances,"[92] Sartre's thesis was a certainly not unconscious attempt to rehabilitate Sorel's claim of a privileged status for the use of violence by the oppressed. The reformulation of

89. K. Jaspers, *Philosophy is for Everyman* (New York, 1969), p. 49.
90. K. Jaspers, *Warheit, Freiheit, und Friede* (Munich, 1958), p. 11.
91. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Preface" to *Wretched of the Earth* by Franz Fanon (New York: Grove Press, 1968), p. 30.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

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Marxism undertaken in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason* sought to provide a complex theoretical justification for this thesis.

Sartre's basic assumption holds that reciprocity and recognition, in which freedom and transparent praxis obtain, stop at the threshold of scarcity, i.e., history. As determined by scarcity, history is *contingent* and is logically preceded by the recognition to the extent that, *beyond* this history, one can imagine a philosophy of freedom: "As soon as there will exist for *everyone* a margin of *real* freedom beyond the production of life, Marxism will have lived out its span; a philosophy of freedom will take its place. But we have no means, no intellectual instrument, no concrete experience which allows us to conceive of this freedom or of this philosophy."[93] Thus, Marxism comes to dominate the scene, as it appears as a philosophy capable of explaining an *antagonistic reciprocity* in which man is seen as anti-human.

A "Manichean" pattern emerges, in which the individual's rationality is a rationality of violence. "Here, violence is not a simple, naive ferocity of man, but the comprehensible reinteriorization by everyone of the contingent fact of scarcity."[94] In a world of scarcity, violence becomes the sole means expressing the freedom of individuals and social groups. Once again, we encounter a reasoning analogous to Weil's and explicitly rejected by both Wittgenstein and Gandhi: the good exists and recognition is possible, but not in this world (it is of little consequence whether God or the end of history, characterized by unlimited abundance, is invoked). Free and transparent consciousness, i.e., the point of departure of Sartre's philosophy, does not exist in history, which, instead, is the realm of the practico-inert.

The claim that history is contingent allows Sartre to hypothesize a state of affairs where man's irreducible freedom can unfold. This hypothesis, however, is vacuous. Existing reality is one of antagonistic reciprocity in which the Other appears only as anti-human. Interruption of the continuum of violence, i.e., a situation in which there is a recognized reciprocity of practices exists only beyond scarcity (and the class struggle). Aron justly notes that "in the best analysis, the practico-inert is indistinguishable from the world within which our daily life unfolds: it is at once infernal and banal."[95] Since everyday life is permeated by violence, it is a state of total sorrow that must be radically rejected.

But how? Through revolt, i.e., the unfolding of a collective praxis — the group-in-fusion — which wrests the individual from the seriality of the practico-inert. In any case, violence is once again the animating principle of freedom. The group identifies itself through a friend-enemy logic. With great insight, Aron observes that it is understandable why the projected work on

93. This claim concludes the first part of Sartre's *The Question of Method* (London: Methuen, 1963), p. 34.

94. R.D. Laing and D.G. Cooper, *Reason and Violence* (London, 1964), p. 176.

95. Raymond Aron, *History and the Dialectic of Violence* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), p. 52.

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ethics, announced at the end of *Being and Nothingness*, has never been written.[96] Specifically, this ethics has been transformed into a politics that, step by step, reformulates in a language different only in form the entire Marxist account of the party-class relation. No morality can exist in a society marked by scarcity and class struggle: the only possible code of behavior is that of revolt. This primacy of politics over morality stems from the assumption that revolt is the only possible answer to the alienation of consciousness, as was produced, without exception, in the world of social interaction and history: "Man is violent — *throughout* history right up to the present day (until the elimination of scarcity, should this ever occur, and occur *in particular circumstances*) — to the anti-human (that is to say, to any other man) and to his *Brother* in so far as he has the permanent possibility of becoming anti-human himself."[97]

The overcoming of violence as a structure of human action is only possible with the achievement of a state of abundance, i.e., a state of affairs completely independent of individual responsibility and choice. Revolution is the sole recourse, even destiny, given this reformulation of Marxism which has taken on the somber tone of a social Darwinism, of a philosophy of competition, and of a struggle of one against all. Sartre cannot say how, given the *ubiquity* of violence (according to which there is no alternative but to counterpose revolutionary to institutional violence), the transition can be made to a non-antagonistic reciprocity. In his interpretation of the connection between history, scarcity and violence, Sartre has burned his bridges on a trip without return.

Aron's critique of Sartre not only contains a rigorous analysis of the mechanisms that lead Sartre from ontological individualism to a philosophy of violence, but it also indirectly illustrates what can be considered the fundamental contradiction of moderate European intellectuals and, in a new guise, the current ideological crisis of the Left. In the course of 250 pages, Aron critically outlines the mechanisms that lead Sartre, in the formulation of his conception of freedom, to an identification of reason and violence. Yet, over the course of two decades, Aron himself has been involved in a project whose central aim was to demonstrate the reasonableness, inevitability, and limited practicality of war — even in the nuclear era. In this case, the defense of violence means the *realistic* acceptance of a *de facto* situation.

Aron's thesis, which he has defended since the publication in 1957 of *On War*, is that the nuclear era does not alter, fundamentally, the traditional account of violence. He dismisses the unconditionally optimistic thesis that the accumulated destructive potential can somehow be converted into a factor for peace as well as the opposing thesis that a catastrophe is inevitable. The "realistic" perspective rests on the conviction that, even if nuclear war proves to be impracticable from any reasonable standpoint, the law of violence will not be cleansed from human history: "No single weapon — however revo-

96. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

97. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (London: New Left Books, 1976), pp. 736-737.

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lutionary — suffices to change human nature."[98] Between non-violence and unlimited violence there is a prudential use of violence, which is a constitutive element in the very nature of States: "cold-blooded monsters," determined to safeguard at any cost the principle of sovereignty, are therefore inevitably opposed to any real disarmament that could only be achieved through the creation of a state of mutual trust and cooperation.[99] Cold war and peaceful coexistence thus become two different manifestations of the same trend in international relations, which stems both from the rejection of open nuclear confrontation and from the impossibility of a peaceful solution to the conflicts inherited from World War II.[100]

This 1957 book already includes a passing reference to *Vom Kriege*, which later became the central motif of the two-volume work of 1976, *Clausewitz on War*. In Aron's view, the famous Clausewitzian adage, rather than implying an inevitable military solution to every political conflict, represents a clear reaffirmation of the primacy of politics in the formulation of strategic plans: "the pure concept of war excludes as such the principle of moderation."[101] Aron's main task is to uncouple the "inevitable" reality of violence from the perspective of the apocalypse. If the latter was shown to be inherent in the nuclear era, it would not only automatically support the pacifist thesis, but would also engender a questioning of the existing social and political order.

The denial of the possibility of any autonomous strategic calculation (implicit in Clausewitz's thesis) allows him to deal with the abnormality of nuclear war within a *logic of moderation* which does not rule out war but co-exists with it, while rejecting any thought of "final victory," i.e., the definitive annihilation of the adversary. In this respect, Aron must clearly sever *Vom Kriege* from any possible Hegelian influence. The combatants do not fight to the death for recognition, according to the master-slave dialectic in the *Phenomenology*. Rather, war seems once again treatable within a contractual scheme, within the logic of the *tame man* who does not strive for "overcoming," but only for the best way to guarantee his self-preservation. Nuclear technology does not necessitate any changes in the logical framework of the contract nor does it question the principle of moderation implicit in it. Relations between states are nothing more than a grand version of a micro-conflictuality which imbues, without catastrophic effect, the whole system of daily relations.

For Aron, reaffirmation of the continued validity of the Clausewitzian conceptual framework, even in the nuclear era, means the continual validity of the outlook that "subjects force to political aims, and seeks rationality in the adaptation of the means to the end, the reasonable in the choice of the ends."[102] War as continuation of politics by other means thus reflects the primacy of politics, i.e., the primacy of a rationality based on a cost-benefit

98. Raymond Aron, *On War* (New York, 1966), p. 2.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
101. Raymond Aron, *Penser la guerre, Clausewitz* (Paris, 1976), vol. 1, p. 365.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

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analysis that has facilitated the development of capitalist culture and, despite the exceptionally destructive character of nuclear arms, continues to serve as the real guarantee of human survival. Aron seeks to show how the logic of *self-interest*, upon which this civilization is based, is not undermined by the threat of total war, but rather, the latter ensures the compatibility of violence with the survival of humanity. The significance of his position lies in the fact that, by clearing the air of any facile alarmism, he pre-empts any pacifism built upon fear. In effect, the anxiety generated by the prospects of a nuclear conflict (through a related rational calculation) constitutes the main guarantee for our survival. States are monsters but their impulses can be tamed and the heat of their blood constantly kept under control. This elementary truth, according to which violence is not excluded from the calculation, underlies a culture of peace that moves, theoretically, far beyond the pure and simple imagery of the apocalypse to a confrontation with that rationality of exclusion which Aron assumes to be the major guarantee of human survival.

Here it is important to ask to what extent and for how long Sartre's and Aron's positions will continue to be representative of the poles of a political dialectic (or, alternatively, of a pendular movement recurrent in the history of European intellectuals) moving between violence as *project* and violence as *realism*, as it is reflected in the acceptance of the current situation. Aron correctly notes that, on one side, we have a concept of freedom that, as a perennial rejection of the existing state of affairs, "condemns every condemnation of utopia."[103] Actually, Sartre can conceive of change only in terms of *project, utopia, violence*, i.e., only through the creation of a state of affairs not only radically different from but also without connection with the existing one. In contrast, we have the typical answer of the moderate, the neo-Machiavellian, for whom any future city created by the prince sooner or later is bound to exhibit "the familiar traits of the domination of man by man."[104]

After an entire historical phase during which violence was posed, in the view of European intellectuals, as an indispensable means for regaining a sphere of recognition and reciprocity, the pendulum seems to have swung back recently to the view that violence can peacefully rest on itself. But in the forms they assume in the Sartre-Aron contraposition, these two perspectives can be shown to be not only opposed but also symmetrical. Ultimately, the reformulation of historical materialism in terms of scarcity forcefully shows how the entire logic of the class struggle reiterates and even exacerbates the mechanism of exclusion which dominates this mode of production. The logic informing the action of Sartre's "historical subject" is the same that Aron invokes as the constitutive element of the modern State. Only abundance, i.e., something no less contingent than scarcity, can, in the last analysis, interrupt the *continuum* of violence. Interestingly enough, when Sartre was writing the *Critique*, American proponents of the Great Society, in a language devoid of

103. Aron, *History and the Dialectic of Violence, op.cit.*, p. 215.
104. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

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any messianism, suggested something strangely analogous: more development and growth would end the distributive conflict and foreclose a scenario characterized by a dangerous zero-sum game.

Violence and Non-violence in the Crisis of the Respublica (Arendt)

The recent shift from the perspective of the 1960s, however, is not just the result of the crisis of revolutionary violence. While developments in the Third World do not seem to have brought about a rupture in the *continuity* of repression, the moderate culture of state-rationality has undergone significant delegitimation. In the mid-1970s, Aron wrote that "war and, more generally, violence are not so much like a mine explosion or the spread of a disease as they are like an instrument that a human will can put at the service of its ends."[105] Such a brazen reiteration of Clausewitz's thesis fails to take into account the significance of the "silent revolution" then under way, i.e., the complex pre-political shake-up of customs and life-styles.[106] This "silent revolution" would compromise, precisely at that time, the mechanism of delegation and trust without which there cannot be a rational "calculus" typical of State-rationality.

The argument for a controlled use of violence, based entirely on the typically Weberian concept of state-rationality as constituting the *destiny* of human civilization, fails to come to grips with the *deflation of power* that has come to afflict the entire Western world (with analogous repercussions in states under Soviet hegemony). It is precisely this crisis of Western political systems, the increasing inability to restore consensus *vis-à-vis* the state, that provides mankind the most crucial tool for avoiding nuclear war. For does this not indicate a drastic reduction in the state's autonomous power to undertake initiatives, without which the Clausewitzian hypothesis is inconceivable? More generally, has not the threat of war prompted a reappraisal of that traditional orientation of the European Left, which tends to view active participation in the life of the nation as always positive and almost a value in itself? Moreover, does not the allegedly growing passivity of the masses imply a rejection of the violent component of politics? It should not be forgotten that the two world wars were made possible only by an exceptional mass mobilization around the nation-state, i.e., within a climate of a formidable revival of nationalism as a value in itself. Then, can the present crisis of politics not be interpreted as the space within which it is possible to bring about significant innovations in the life of large collectivities?

To shed light on this issue, it is useful to re-examine how Arendt, writing during the height of the American crisis of the late 1960s, treated the link between the crisis of the *respublica* and the problem of violence. Her 1969 work *On Violence* essentially argues that a restoration of the representative capacity of the political system is the only response to the spread of violence. Arendt's

105. Aron, *Penser la guerre, Clausewitz, op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 173.

106. R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

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view of the nature of the American crisis is unambiguous: the present crisis of consensus does not question particular aspects of the nation's political life but rather that "tacit agreement" upon which any political community rests and which allows its functioning and reproduction. The re-emergence of civil disobedience is seen as a sign that the crisis concerns the *consensus universalis*, i.e., a freely accepted accord that underlies respect for the law.[107] As far as the State is concerned, the major consequence is a crisis in its decision-making capacity. The world's greatest power cannot bring to an end, militarily, a limited war, despite its overwhelming technological superiority: "If power has anything to do with the we-will-we-can, as distinguished from the mere we-can, then we have to admit that our power has become impotent."[108]

Paradoxically, Arendt sees this phenomenon of delegitimation of power (and therefore the containment of its destructive force) as a danger that opens the door to violence. At the heart of her analysis and her dialogue with the youth movement is the profound opposition between violence and power, which she assumes to be two mutually exclusive concepts. Given this perspective, one can understand her conviction that restoring the stability and authority of power is the only means to protect society against dangerous adventures. Here we have the key to Arendt's whole work as it was shaped in relation to the major political catastrophes besetting Europe in the interwar period. At the same time, we can detect her effort to find in the American reality an alternative political model endowed with the democratic stability so severely compromised in the old Continent.

There is a theoretical inconsistency in explicitly conferring on politics a sort of dignity and ontological status, which begins with identifying it with "acting and speaking together." Having assumed man to be a "political animal," with the consequent absence of any distinction between politics and society as it occurs within the capitalist mode of production, Arendt depicts the recurrent catastrophic tendency of this century as that set of forms which threaten the original equilibrium of a political community constituted by freely interacting individuals. If politics is action, discussing and being together within the context of a shared language and shared customs, then violence is a "fabrication," a gut-wrenching and destructive interference with these existing relations.[109]

The logic leading to the Holocaust is only the most extreme manifestation of this idea of the ultimate fabrication of civil life, which permeates all modernity and revolves around the notion of *homo faber*. Her notion of politics seems almost to take on the contours of a *Gemeinschaft* menaced by all those phenomena that go back to the idea of progress. Violence can destroy politics. It is no accident that Arendt follows Jaspers, her teacher, in his view that Gandhism loses its validity should it encounter the totalitarian universe that arises during the interwar period.[110] The revolutionary model, as it emerged in the course

107. Hannah Arendt, *Crises of the Republic* (New York and London, 1972), pp. 88-89.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
109. This is the dominant theme in Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago and London, 1958), pp. 200-201.
110. Arendt, *Crises of the Republic, op.cit.*, p. 152.

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of French history, shares with totalitarianism (objectively stemming from those processes of violent atomization produced by mass society) the claim that new political arrangements can be made *ex novo*. The underlying thread in this attempt to create a new power is that violence can replace the multiplicity of bonds upon which a political community is based.

In this counterposition between violence and politics (or between fabrication and community, between the artificial and the spontaneous), Arendt remains acritically within the philosophy of contractualism. Violence is seen as a "pre-political" state, generated within an arena external and prior to the system of agreements, promises and pacts that constitute the fabric of the political community: "In so far as violence plays a predominant role in wars and revolutions, both occur outside the political realm, strictly speaking, in spite of their enormous role in recorded history. This fact led the seventeenth century, which had its share of experience in wars and revolutions, to the assumption of a prepolitical state, called 'state of nature' which, of course, never was meant to be taken as a historical fact. Its relevance even today lies in the recognition that a political realm does not automatically come into being wherever men live together, and that there exist events which, though they may occur in a strictly historical context, are not really political and perhaps not even connected with politics.[111]

The state of nature can thus re-emerge periodically in history through some collapse of politics. This reformulation is a step backward in relation to those elements originally deemed essential to contractualism. For Hobbes, in the world of politics based on the contract, the active use of violence is suspended. But it never becomes the realm where free communication between individuals takes place: force continues to figure in all the solutions to the problems of order. Arendt's theoretical model is thus apologetic to the extent that it severs any bond between the politics and the conflictual, contradictory and exclusionary structure of the social realm.

A correct understanding of the role that the production of consent plays in the determination of the structure of power is transformed into an idealized and sublimated vision of politics as the realm of pure rational communication, purged of any elements of violence or oppression. In a way, this is just another idealization of liberal democracy, very similar to that encountered in Habermas and Jaspers. In Arendt's *On Violence* we find frequent references to the work of d'Entrèves on the problem of the irreducibility of the authority of the State to the realm of the more or less legal use of force. But d'Entrèves' entire work heads in a direction completely opposed to this non-critical acceptance of the "natural character" of politics. His passionate defense of the need for a philosophy of politics (as a level of reflection distinct from and counterposed to an empirical science of politics), to the extent that its pro-

111. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (Middles, 1982), p. 19 (first published in 1962). On the limitations of the concept of power in Arendt, see Jürgen Habermas, "Hannah Arendt: On the Concept of Power," in *Philosophical-Political Profiles* (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1983), pp. 171-188.

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grammatic aim is to leave open the question of political obligation, inevitably underscores the non-necessity and therefore the possibly transitional character of the State.

Positive laws, i.e., regulated force, are not sufficient to create duties. The coercion of the State as a juridical arrangement (i.e., as the holder of power and not just force) is not sufficient to transform it into a source of obligation. A different, superior instance commands obedience, i.e., the authority which is inevitably linked to a *moral scrutiny*. In d'Entrèves' view, "it is only because we, through a moral decision, have attributed and still attribute a value to the State, that it can command and that its laws have for us not only a coercive but also a binding power."[112] Of course, he does not locate the roots of the violence of the state and of politics, and a critique of the exclusionary rationality of contractualism remains outside the scope of his work.[113] Nonetheless, to the extent that he re-introduces the issue of obligation, he cannot help but vaguely allude to associational forms that are different from the State or, at least, remind us of the transitory history of a culture shaped around it. "The days of the nation-State are numbered. Those of a new *communis patria* are just beginning. By facilitating the emergence of this new homeland, by articulating the norms that will provide the foundations for a better and more encompassing society, we can lay the groundwork for a new and perhaps superior form of political obligation."[114]

On the one hand, in a 1969 work (i.e., written about the same time as the book by Arendt cited above), d'Entrèves, in a theoretically more consistent manner than his German colleague, came out against the thesis that democracy has no room for individual repudiation of the law (thus rejecting the idea that the problem of procedure exhausts the moral content of the law). On the other, he counseled the student movement that civil disobedience and nonviolence were the only legitimate means to show one's discontent with existing laws. In this context, then, the crisis of authority engendered by the withdrawal of consent is far from becoming the antechamber of a new catastrophe or a retrogression to the "state of nature" (as in Arendt's theoretical and political model). Rather, it appears to be the pre-condition for the emergence of new forms of *freedom* and *morality* — an important step in the process of reappropriation by society of its prerogatives.[115]

A Non-political Conclusion

Any peace movement in today's world that does not reopen the question of political obligation is bound to remain imprisoned within the logic of security

112. Alessandro Passerin d'Entrèves, *Obbedienza e resistenza in una società democratica* (Milan, 1970), p. 85.

113. D'Entrèves explicitly addresses the problem of moving beyond a vision of freedom as "absence of obstacles" or "lack of obligation" to a positive vision in which freedom "is found in the carrying out of a duty" (*Obbedienza e resistenza, op.cit.*, p. 100). On this positive view of freedom, see his major theoretical contribution, *The Notion of the State: An Introduction to Political Theory* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 211-221.

114. D'Entrèves, *Obbedienza e resistenza, op.cit.*, p. 86.

115. *Ibid.*, pp. 215-231.

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and within what is compatible with it. For example, we believe that the call for immediate and unilateral renunciation of violence is indispensable, but we are likewise convinced of the political problems of unilateral disarmament. One cannot remain within the logic of the state and try to channel it in a different direction. This old "trick," ultimately doomed to fail, has characterized all efforts of renewal undertaken in the course of this century. For this reason, the language of a peace movement must be a *radically non-political* language, i.e., a language that, in one way or another, strives to portray human society outside the perspective of the State.[116] Whatever challenges and threatens the idea of State sovereignty, both at the domestic and the international level, moves within a perspective of peace. We must recall that the very idea of the existence of an abstract entity endowed with final and sovereign decision-making power over all aspects and issues in the life of the collectivity goes back, at most, only four centuries.

Any account of non-violence cannot but take up again and put to use the idea of the "withering away" of the state. This is not to be taken in the patently ridiculous sense of a reduction in the division of labor and in administrative functions, which instead are becoming ever more extensive due to the needs of a complex society. The well-known observations in Lenin's *State and Revolution* (easily refuted by Kelsen) head in this direction and are caught within an insurmountable contradiction, represented by Lenin's attempt to simultaneously advocate violence and the withering away of the state. Modern scientific developments allow us to imagine the total computerization of the State's technico-administrative functions, coincidentally with complete control over this system of centralized information through a capillary proliferation of access terminals or personal computers. Developments in telecommunication thus render fully visible the *possibility* of a complete scission between *technical* functions and the State's *domination*.

This withering away of the State is thus totally different from the violent and inactualizable withering away postulated by Marxism (as well as by the Jacobin Marx, raving about the unfolding of history through the violence of one part against the totality of the social body) but instead comes very close to that conceived by the "great" Marx, who, over and over during his lifetime, identified the essential character of the mode of production in the violence of the logic of exclusion: "Human emancipation will only be complete when [man] has recognized and organized his own powers as social powers so that he no longer separates this social power from himself as political power."[117] Here is a message that reaches beyond the confines of experts in Marxology, precisely

116. D'Entrèves rightly notes that the state, as far as it is not pure force, is "due to a sense of *obligation*, to an 'agreement' on the ends to be pursued in the common life, on the criteria which fix and condition obedience. This kind of 'agreement' is not merely an important element in the notion of the state, it is the very condition of its existence" (*The Notion of the State, op.cit.*, p. 5). The thesis that it is logically impossible to demonstrate the connection between consensus and political obligation is put forward by A.J. Simmons in *Moral Principles and Political Obligations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

117. Marx, "On the Jewish Question," *op.cit.*, p. 31.

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because of its radicalism in calling individuals to question the State, parties, and the system of representation based on an immediate perception of a sense of self. This is Gandhi's universe, rather than Lenin's. It is the call for the realization, in this nuclear era, of a "new way of life"[118] rather than the project of a "party of a new type," to provide the essential mediation for reappropriating the non-utopian meaning inherent in this great theoretical intuition. To conclude in the way that we have tried to outline it, non-violence can be summed up in the following two propositions: (1) The idea of *peace* necessarily implies that of *change*. No peace other than the one guaranteed by the system of security is possible within the exclusionary logic of the contract. (2) Such change is neither a *process* that can be more or less directed and guided from without, nor some kind of natural event, but rather a *praxis* with which everyone can begin experimenting day by day: "Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul, and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration."[119]

118. On this theme, see Arne Naess, *Gandhi and the Nuclear Age* (New York, 1965), pp. 45ff.

119. M. Gandhi, *Non-violence in Peace and War, op.cit.*, vol. 1, p. 4.

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ON THE RATIONALITY OF DEMOCRATIC CHOICE*

by Alessandro Pizzorno

To Gino Germani, a friend

1. Introduction

That each individual acts according to his own interests, that he is the best judge of these interests, whether economic or political, and that democratic government, given representative mechanisms that allow citizens to choose among different political offerings, is automatically the most efficient one possible for satisfying people's interests — this is a series of assumptions that lies behind a lot of common-sense opinions that lead people to prefer democracy over other forms of government.

A general theory of government rests on these same assumptions, elaborated by a vast, specialized literature. Already it seems to dominate totally the academic scene in Anglo-Saxon countries, is spreading also to Scandinavia, Germany, and Switzerland, and is even being discussed in Italy.

It is a theory with *positive* goals, inasmuch as it wants to construct models capable of predicting real events on the assumption that, given the consciousness of individual agents' ends (deducible from their interests) and given their rationality (their ability to choose the most convenient means to achieve their ends), their choices of action follow. But paralleling this predictive goal, the theory also has *normative* ambitions. If the opportunity of each one pursuing his own interests is a value, then the procedure that permits the greatest possible number to pursue their own interests becomes the foundation of a prescription. This will provide, therefore, the means of solving the old dilemma inherent in every deliberation on democracy: Are the values of political liberty ends in themselves or are they justified solely as a way to achieve other ends, for example, the greatest satisfaction of a society's needs? If the theory is valid, liberty and efficiency, egoism and collective utility will be in harmony, as is already the case in the free marketplace. It could also be claimed that the theory is realistic (because it recognizes individual egoism) while at the same time legitimating democracy (because it recognizes the achievability of the common good, thanks to its decision-making procedure).

Theories that base themselves on the above premises merit attention, not only because of their far-reaching influence, but also because of what they have been able to achieve when systematically applied.[1]

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1. These theories can be designated by the term "neo-utilitarian." Other terms used are "economic theories of democracy" and "theories of rational choice." I generally will use the first,

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There are two ways to evaluate a theory: The first is to judge whether the assumptions on which it is based are realistic. The second is to see whether it explains them more coherently than other theories do; and to check whether the facts it incorporates are the most relevant to the theory's express intentions. This second method is considered the most correct. In fact, it is possible that assumptions that appear to be quite unrealistic can be used to develop arguments that produce propositions with good explanatory value. But, obviously, when the second kind of examination isn't convincing, there are good reasons for using the first kind.

The specific empirical predictions of neo-utilitarian theories are concerned with the phenomena of voting behavior, the various ways in which political parties compete, the operation of systems of representation, the various decisions about public spending (whether the government favors producers over consumers, redistributes tax revenue to lower-income classes or to middle-income classes), and so forth. Until now, the examination of these predictions has shown that, as with other theories (such as those that are concerned with the tendency of governments to favor producers), the proposed variables do not show up in observable or quantifiable indicators, or that the proposed hypotheses are not verified.[2]

Despite such weak empirical success, the theoretical production based on these premises continues to grow, probably because the premises seem plausible and the conclusions derivable from them seem ideologically desirable. The premises assume that individuals act politically to pursue their interests and that the procedure based on freedom of choice (guaranteed by one or another constitutional technique) allows them to choose the politics best suited to satisfying those interests. These premises come to be considered plausible enough so that they are used for constructing more refined models of interpretation of political phenomena.

Since the empirical results of this approach have already been examined elsewhere, I will follow a different strategy here. I will examine the ability of these models to explain types of behavior that have a great bearing on a politi-

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but at times also the other two interchangeably. The initial statement of the theory is in A. Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York, 1957). The most recent comprehensive formulation is in W.H. Riker and P.C. Ordeshook, "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting," *American Political Science* Review, 62 (March 1968), pp. 25-42. One good but uncritical general review is in D.C. Mueller, *Public Choice* (London, 1979). A useful textbook attempt is in D. Whynes and R. Bowles, *The Economic Theory of the State* (London, 1982). Original variations can be found in A. Breton, *The Economic Theory of Representative Government* (Chicago, 1974); J.M. Buchanan and G. Tullock, *The Calculus of Consent* (Ann Arbor, 1962); N. Frolich *et al., Political Leadership and Collective Goods* (Princeton, 1971); "Towards a Mathematical Model of Government Behavior," in *Zeitschrift für Nationalökonomie*, 28 (1968), pp. 355-380. A general review of theories of democracy is in J.R. Pennock, *Democratic Political Theory* (Princeton, 1979). In Italy, apart from the first outlines in G. Sartori, *Democratic Theory* (New York, 1965), the neo-utilitarian theories have been discussed for the most part in relation to neo-contractualism. Among recent contributions are S. Veca, *La Società Giusta* (Milan, 1982), and S. Zamagni, "Rawls tra contrattualismo e utilitarismo," in *Modelli di razionalità nelle scienze economico-sociali* (Arsenale Cooperativa Editrice).

2. Cf. Mueller, *op.cit.*, and above all the destructive and convincing analysis by J.F.J. Tove, "Economic Theories of Politics and Public Finance," in *British Journal of Political Science* (October 1976), pp. 433-447.

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cal system — i.e., voting, militant activity, taking up a political career. Then, in Section 2, I will analyze not so much the realism of the premises (which also has been done before)[3] as the logical coherence of assuming that individuals act with an eye to satisfying certain interests. This has never yet been done. In Section 3, I will examine whether theories other than neo-utilitarianism explain political phenomena in a more convincing way. Finally, I will outline a conception of politics that can serve as the foundation of a more comprehensive theory, not only insofar as it explains the pertinent phenomena used as a test, but also insofar as it answers two questions that, explicitly or implicity, trouble every deliberation on democracy. The first is to find out if it is possible to justify democratic choice as *rational* choice, in its double aspect of (a) collective choice, that is the choice of a democratic government as preferable to any other, and of (b) an individual choice, that is, selection carried out in accordance with democratic procedure, a choice that is useful for the satisfaction of a population's preferences. The second is to determine if it is possible to base an economic theory of politics on the assumption that individuals act with a view to pursuing their interests.

2. Neo-utilitarian Theories

2.1 Schumpeter, The Indigestible Precursor

Although Wicksell may be considered the true, consistent precursor of economic theories of democracy, the more interesting one, without a doubt, is Schumpeter, not only because he was more influential, but also because he is more troublesome and indigestible.[4] And, since Schumpeter's positions were just as indigestible as the central concepts in the economic theories of politics that they gave rise to, Schumpeter failed to attract sufficient notice. Consider this brief listing of his more unpopular ideas:

- Since one person's utility will differ from another's and there is no basis for comparing them, a maximum, collective satisfaction is not logically conceivable; hence, such concepts as "common good," "welfare," "collective utility," and so on, have only rhetorical value.
- Since in a democracy governments are obligated to present themselves periodically to the electorate and since the voters have uninformed and fickle opinions, a long-term, organic, consistent political plan is not possible.
- It isn't true that each individual is the best judge of his own interests. He may be, for his immediate interests, but he lacks the knowledge he needs to be a good judge for his long-term interests.
- Since even experts normally are divided in their judgments about the effects a given policy will have, it is illusory to think that citizens will choose among different policies knowing what their consequences will be.

3. Among the numerous exercises in this sense is the old, quite general criticism by C.B. McPherson, *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval* (London, 1973), and J.P. Cornford's more detailed one, "The Political Theory of Scarcity," Inaugural Lecture No. 50, University of Edinburgh (1969).

4. J.A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York, 1950), esp. chapters 21-23.

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- Political choices that are made democratically only because a majority wants them are not necessarily good or rational. Instead, they can be inherently bad — as, for example, when heretics are persecuted, minorities oppressed, unjust wars or wars of conquest declared, and so on. In other words, the democratic process does not necessarily make the result desirable or just.
- Democracy is distinguished from other types of government simply because decisions are made by politicians who hold office only after winning competitions in which the judges are the electorate. The voters, however, only install politicians; they do not control them.

This last point is the one that gave rise to economic theories of democracy. This was seen as a system analogous to free market competition, in which the voters are consumers who, with their vote, acquire the policies they prefer from among those that are proposed to them by political entrepreneurs, who, in turn, with the sale of their policies, acquire or conserve power (that is, hold office). The analogy was incisive — both realistic and systematic — and it should be no surprise that it was so influential on the ranks of political economists.

But this point was not necessarily consistent with Schumpeter's other positions, which were so irreverently critical of traditional utilitarian concepts. Strange buyers, indeed, these voters, unable to evaluate what they are buying, lacking knowledge of how what they buy will work. And strange entrepreneurs these politicians, working not to accumulate profits — a rather muddy category of income, but one that at least is easily convertible into other revenue — but to accumulate power. But power to do what, given that by definition politicians must not have an interest in the promulgation of policies?

In order to introduce a systematic coherence it would be necessary to assume that the voter, when choosing his representatives, is able to evaluate the policies they propose and that therefore his conduct can be considered rational, in the sense of being oriented toward a calculus that maximizes the benefits and minimizes the costs. It is the operation that leads Downs[5] to construct a model of a system that produces values by means of politics, and only by means of politics. In it, voters act as rationally as they are able to, directly or through a third party (representatives), to evaluate the effects that certain policies will have on their interests. The capacity of the system of free choice to lead to more efficient decisions, in the good utilitarian tradition that Schumpeter mocks, is fully reaffirmed in this model. Successfully? Let's see.

2.2. Political Action Isn't Explained

If the voter is a rational agent, why in the world does he do such an irrational thing as vote? As anyone can easily figure out, it doesn't produce any utility, or at the most, a utility only infinitesimally greater than zero, seeing that it is infinitesimally lower than the combined probability that a single vote will be

5. Downs, *op.cit.*

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decisive in the election of a candidate and that the election of the candidate will then be decisive for passage of the desired policies. One could object that the cost of going to vote is very small and, therefore, that people can be easily induced to incur it even if the expected utility is practically nil. This would seem to be borne out by the fact that when for some reason (bad weather, distance from the polls, job duties, and so on) the cost of going to vote increases, voter participation decreases. But precisely this shows the inadequacy of explaining voting by referring to its low cost. After all, even when the costs rise — and keep in mind that they can rise to the point of threatening the physical well-being of the voter when democracy is under attack — many voters still go to vote, and all for no apparent utility. Why indeed?

That isn't all. The theories we are examining consider as a cost even the effort it takes for voters to inform themselves. Now, in the period between two elections, time spent informing ourselves (reading, listening, speaking, etc.) will vary. It may be a few hours, or it may be hundreds or thousands of hours. However one values it, in any case, time spent this way constitutes a disproportionate cost if its utility is measured only by the prudence of a choice that has no probability of producing benefits. Without calculating other incongruencies, people who have spent hundreds of hours informing themselves perform an act that has exactly the same consequences as one performed by someone who has invested only a few hours or minutes. It is likely, too, that on average, the time of the former is more costly than that of the latter, supposing that people who go to great lengths to inform themselves are generally people whose income and education levels are higher. How is it possible to believe that a system in which the investments have such disparate productivity tends toward equilibrium?

What we have described has come to be called the paradox of voting.[6] The need to keep it in the theory without resolving it ought to be enough to discredit any theory. But by carefully analysing it, we can state the problem we are dealing with in a more specific fashion: Is it tenable to analyze political action in cost-benefit terms? And is it tenable to attribute the production of political value only to policies, to laws, to measures that issue forth from organs of the state? And, by doing so, be forced to consider that voting is a cost, that informing ourselves is a cost, that converting others to our own views is a cost, that party work is a cost, and so on? No: if we are to be realistic, it is necessary instead to discover other grounds of value in a political system.

The paradox of voting hasn't passed unnoticed. A large literature deals with it.[7] But the solutions proposed are unsatisfactory, ad hoc explanations. There would be no point in looking at them unless they suggested ways that could be

6. Here I use "paradox" in a sense a little different from that used by Brams in his study of the paradoxical consequences of the application of the theory of rational choice (the impossibility of forming a majority and so on): cf. S. Brams, *Paradoxes in Politics* (New York, 1976). Here I mean to say it is paradoxical that a general theory of democracy must leave unexplained facts so relevant as going to vote and engaging in politics.

7. A critical review of it is to be found in B. Barry, *Economics, Sociologists and Democracy* (London, 1970), pp. 14ff.

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fruitful in developing an alternative theory. Two types of arguments in particular are interesting.

The first is proposed by Downs: "Rational individuals in democracy are, to a certain degree, motivated by a sense of social responsibility relatively independent of their personal gains and losses in the short run."[8] That is, they feel responsible to help maintain a system whose operation can produce benefits over the long run. But the weakness of this argument is evident, seeing that the probability that a single vote can generate positive effects for the survival of the democratic system is as trifling as the chance that the voter will bring victory to his party by his single vote. In other words, if a procedural system is to be considered a public good, it is impossible to escape the "free rider" objection.[9] Still, it is interesting that this explanation, even if weak, was advanced by someone who subscribes to the idea that voting is explained in terms of personal gains and losses. For, after reflecting on its inadequacy, it indicates how one cannot avoid introducing the distinction between a calculus of short- and long-term interests — a distinction that Schumpeter already knew was needed.

The second type of argument is that proposed by Riker and Ordeshook,[10] according to which people vote to affirm solidarity with their party. If this were true, solidarity would be an end in itself — it would be, that is, the source of value and therefore the motive for political choices. But then what would be the connection between this type of action and that oriented instead to maximizing the utility contained in governmental measures? The utilitarian theory would have to be wholly revised. And one would also have to radically revise those theories — more than one — that explain voting behavior as motivated by a feeling of duty.[11]

While the paradox of voting has been long discussed in the literature, it is not so with another paradox that we can call the paradox of the politician.[12] It can be formulated in this way: If the only benefits foreseen by the model are those that follow from the policies produced by the system (the governmental apparatus), the politician as such enjoys none of them; he, in fact, is a "pro-

8. Downs, *op.cit.*, pp. 267f.

9. This originated in the science of finance, presented at the politicological debate by M. Olson, Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), and since then has become the subject of a huge literature.

10. Riker and Ordeshook, *op.cit.*

11. Pennock doesn't seem to notice it when he refers to theories of this kind. Cf. his *Democratic Political Theory, op.cit.*

12. Although Mueller notes it (*o.cit.*, p. 97), he recognizes how much remains vague until the objectives the politician pursues are defined. This aspect entirely escaped Barry in his 1970 book (*op.cit.*). Although he returns to the topic in a recent (unpublished) writing, he proposes, with no theoretical justification, the politicians act for the good of the country. Cf. his unpublished manuscript, "Methodology versus Ideology: The 'Economic' Approach Revisited." In their "What Is Rational Choice?" in *Electoral Studies*, II (April 1983), Budge *et al.* audaciously propose assuming that politicians, like citizens, are *privately* interested in the public goods they produce. We don't have the space to develop the argument here, but one can demonstrate that the consequences are opposite those intended by the authors and lead to thinking about the politician as logically oriented to a collective identification. This agrees with the conclusions that we will reach in this article.

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ducer" and "seller," and not a "purchaser," of politics. The nature of the benefits that he receives from his activity — call it power, satisfaction of office, or something else — is not well defined. In any case, however, the rewards (except in the case of corruption) cannot be converted into benefits produced by the system.

The paradoxicality of this aspect of the theory hides behind two considerations, one that appears to be simple common sense and the other that seems to be in keeping with the theory's premises.

The common-sense consideration is that power is an end in itself, worth pursuing for its own sake, in itself a sufficient motive for action. But this runs into the same objections that can be raised against the ad hoc solution to the paradox of voting. If this common-sense view of power were true, the source of value in the political system would not be only policies, but also something called "power in itself," and the theory we are examining would have to be entirely revised.

The other consideration, springing from political theory, appears as a concept analogous to "profit" in economic theory. There is no room here to go into the difficulties that the concept of profit raises even for economic theory. For now, it is sufficient to observe that profits can be converted into utility (consumption use). According to this theory, though, power is not convertible. The two objectives of action that the model allows for cannot, therefore, be measured by the same criterion.

The paradox of the politician has, in general, passed unnoticed, except for Wittman.[13] In contrast to Downs' model, which assumes that parties are oriented only to getting out the vote and are not interested in programs (they propose programs only in order to acquire power, rather than acquiring power in order to realize programs), Wittman puts forth two models, in both of which the parties' purpose is to realize programs, with election victory being only a means to that end.

In the first model, parties compete with each other and have as their interests their voters' interests; that is, a party coincides with its voters without the mediation of politicians. In the second model, the parties oligopolistically collude among themselves at the cost of the electorate's interests (so a multiparty system tends to behave as a single-party system). This would explain why on more than one occasion American parties have not nominated the candidate that polls show is most likely to win, even when that candidate might be the one best able to carry out the party's program.

However, even if the realization of policies (or programs) is postulated as the end of the politician's actions, there are still two cases: Either the politicians coincide with the voters, and then this case, even more revealingly than Downs' model, comes up against the objection of the "free rider" with respect to public goods; or politicians are regarded as having an interest in realizing certain policies, and one then drops the idea of utility and introduces instead

13. An exception is D.A. Wittman who, in "Parties as Utility Maximizers," in *American Political Science Review*, 67 (1973), pp. 490-498, tries to remove the difficulties it raises.

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the idea of symbolic interest (policies are realized either as a symbol of the party's victory or part of the victory, or as a symbol of steps taken toward a better society, and so on). So, the way to an alternative theory is open. It will be necessary, however, to pursue it beyond a partial model whose premises are not clear.

2.3 The Reasons For Voter Confidence Aren't Explained

The ability of neo-utilitarian theories to make specific predictions has been shown to be of little importance, while their capacity to explain behavior typical and relevant to political life — going to vote, or carrying out political activity — has been seen to be, paradoxically, inadequate. Could it be that the very premises regarding the nature of political choice in democracy are in need of revision? We will examine that now.

Consider that in Downs' simplified version of the model, the voter must choose between two parties. He will choose the one that, if elected, will procure him the greatest utility. The voter will infer, from data he can observe, the probability of future events. The observable data are the promises that the two parties make to the voters (their proposals for policies); and beyond that, for the incumbent party, its record. Evaluating promises is not the same thing as evaluating policies already in place, and the fact that the party in power has to be judged also on how much it has already accomplished allows the voter to give less weight to its promises. This explains the fact, frequently verified, that the opposition party has more need than the incumbent one to develop a programmatic and ideological discourse. To some extent, however, both parties have to propose, more or less explicitly, programs and ideology. What can vary are the arguments that each uses in the effort to win voter confidence.

But here it is necessary to make a distinction: it is one thing for voters to calculate the utility that could be obtained by the future action of a candidate, but it is quite another why they would place their confidence in him. Someone can make me the most enticing promises, but I still wouldn't necessarily have any confidence in his ability to carry them out. And since every party is able to make attractive promises, it is likely that citizens will choose one party over another not because this one makes grander promises to procure their utility, but because it inspires greater trust. Thus, a theory of democratic choice, rather than addressing the utilities that citizens will derive from the parties' programs, should turn to the study of the reasons why citizens express confidence in this or that party. This is a social relation that logically must take precedence over service or the sale of useful measures in exchange for votes.

So, are neo-utilitarian theories able to tell us anything about this problem? One of the more elaborate and more recent attempts to do this is that of Fiorina.[14] In order to explain electoral choice, Fiorina constructs an equation that includes four factors. The first, already considered by the preceding

14. Cf. M.P. Fiorina, "An Outline for a Model of Party Choice," *American Journal of Political Science,* 21:3 (1977), pp. 601-625; and his "Economic Retrospective Voting in American National Elections: A Micro-Analysis," in *American Journal of Political Science*, 22:2 (1978), pp. 426-443.

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theories, is the predictable utility of the results of a party's policies. When the vote is based only on this factor, it is called a vote on the issues. It is the vote of the rational citizen par excellence (setting aside, of course, the basic irrationality of going to vote as such and of looking into the issues at stake). But this factor isn't enough to explain the results of empirical research, which show that the voters choose not on the basis of any comparison of the parties' respective promises, but rather after judging government actions.[15] This is a matter quite different from the calculation of expected utility. In this case, it isn't an evaluation of promises, but a matter of rewarding and punishing past actions. The voter, according to Fiorina, acts like "a rational god of vengeance and reward"[16] and with a symbolic act confers praise or blame on its public servants. This vote, by a citizen who operates as a judge of government activity, Fiorina calls a "simple retrospective vote."

Since the vote on the issues plus the simple retrospective vote are not enough to explain the empirical results of election investigations, Fiorina adds two more factors to his equation. The third is what has traditionally been called "party identification." This remains outside the economic theory of democracy because it is not justifiable by the rational calculation of the utility of certain policies, but instead leads back to a persistent identification with a party even when the voter would have an interest in voting for a different party. To overcome the theoretical horror of a kind of monster voter, Fiorina tries to explain party identification as a kind of complex, historical retrospective vote. Thus, party identification would be the result of a single voter's evaluation of all his past experiences with a given party, starting from the moment he cast his first vote. Finally, in order to explain the strong persistence of the hereditary vote, Fiorina invokes a fourth factor — "initial bias," or the original bent "that the individual carries with him on entering into the political arena and which presumably is a direct function of socialization, but indirectly is a function of the socialized agent's past political experience."[17]

It hardly needs to be emphasized that there is but scant possibility of ever applying empirically a model that calls for the measurement of such variables as a voter's experience of all the elections in which he has participated and the experiences he underwent as he was being socialized (to which a multitude of people can contribute). The author himself recognizes this. One can, however, draw a suggestion from this model. In fact, it shows that consistently pursuing the path of an economic analysis of the vote — and, more obviously, reducing a citizen's grounds for confidence in a party to an evaluation of measures passed — requires expanding the concept of the "calculating cit-

15. The observations gathered show that when certain economic indicators (above all those of disposable, per capita income, unemployment and inflation) behave negatively, the government in charge tends to lose votes in the following elections. Whoever thinks he has enjoyed economic improvements in the period between elections is more likely to vote for the party in power. Cf. Fiorina, "Economic Retrospective Voting," *op.cit.* The evidence is not very strong and is valid only for certain kinds of elections; the empirical result remains more relevant for a theory of political choice based on economic evaluation.

16. "An Outline for a Model of Party Choice," *op.cit.*, p. 604.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 610.

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izen" to that of "citizen judge."

On the other hand, if this concept of "citizen judge" is not entirely consistent with the premises of a rigorous neo-utilitarian theory, it is still compatible with the idea of a democracy in which the governors are in some measure responsible for facing the citizens and being rewarded or punished by them. Current observations and research seem to confirm the existence of this partial motivation for voting.[18] The rationality of it, in the sense of its efficacy in producing certain ends for government action, doesn't concern us here. It is quite probable that it may have the effect that already worried Schumpeter — namely, of obstructing a coherent economic policy and of producing, instead, electoral economic cycles ruinous to the economy. Furthermore, inasmuch as the attribution of the economic conditions at any given time to the economic policy of the government is based on inadequate information, it easily might not be warranted. It remains a fact that citizens' voting is at least in part a function of what they perceive to have been the economic policy of a government, and governments, at least in part, act as they do being conscious of this.[19] Therefore, while one must reject the notion that the *only* ground for citizen confidence in government and representatives is the outcome of the policies they followed, that outcome *can*, however, represent one reason among others. But we must see how this can occur, if what we have said about the impossibility of a utilitarian calculus grounding the citizen's decision to go to vote is true.

For now, we are closing the critique of the neo-utilitarian theories. They explain neither specific events that other theories don't explain, nor general actions, such as those of voting citizens and professional politicians. Are better explanations available from other theories?

3. Symbolic Theories of Politics

The most radical alternative to utilitarian theories is identified by what we can call "symbolic theories of politics."[20] Unlike utilitarian theories, they do not form a compact and cumulatively growing body. It will, therefore, be best to analyze them by picking out some of their principal theoretical foci.

The first illuminates the phenomenon of *solidarity*. Political choice would be determined by the voter's social affiliation, not by the utility that he calculates political measures have for him, since solidarity and loyalty, and not personal advantage, would be at the base of his vote. Social solidarities exist before

18. I refer here to the literature on political cycles which is expanding rapidly following W.D. Nordhaus's article, "The Political Business Cycle," in *Review of Economic Studies*, 42 (1975), pp. 169-190. An extensive review is in E.R. Tufte, *Political Control of the Economy* (Princeton, 1978). A critical analysis is forthcoming in Barry's "Methodology versus Ideology," *op.cit.*

19. The most celebrated case is recounted by Nixon in his *Seven Crises*.

20. This distinction between neo-utilitarian theories and symbolic theories is quite different both from Barry's distinction between economic and sociological theories (in *Economics, Sociologists and Democracy, op.cit.*), which is inexplicably partisan and distorted, and from Harsanyi's brief but incisive one: in J.C. Harsanyi, "Rational-Choice Models vs. Functionalistic and Conformistic Models of Political Behavior," in *World Politics*, 21 (1969), pp. 513-538. In both cases, the tendentiousness of the choice is obvious.

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political choice, being expressions of the social structure, and they can, therefore, appeal to ethnic, linguistic, religious, class, territorial, vocational, or any other type of identity. The political vote is a symbolic supplement that can reinforce that solidarity.[21]

The heredity of the vote, its adhesiveness, and the fact that going to vote despite the knowledge that it will decide nothing, are facts that this theory can explain. But it doesn't fare as well with other facts. In order to explain changes in voters' choices, for example, the theory can only make reference to changes in the structure of social groups, social mobility, and so forth. But certainly, changes of this kind are slower and more erratic than those that are reflected in sudden electoral movements, or, further, than those of electoral volatility, that is, shifts of vote in early returns, and such things. This holds even more if these shifts, according to some investigations, appear to be correlated with the voters' perceptions of the state of the economy.

But even more obvious is this theory's inability to explain why a homogeneous group chooses one party over another. The theory, that is, explains individual choices, but not group choices, which, nevertheless, are assumed to precede the former. Nothing here suggests that group choices depend on a calculation of expected consequences from these political choices.

Finally, the solidarity to which the theory refers emerges from social or cultural conditions. Politics simply confirms it. But, if so, what is the need for political discourse, persuasion, and definition of ends and values, and, hence, of comparison between different conceptions of the common good? Is it not precisely this kind of discourse and the organized and militant activity that is connected to it, that is needed to establish or re-establish the identities to which the solidarity then appeals?

In conclusion, the consideration of solidarity constitutes an advance over the theory of individual choice based on maximum expected utility, and it explains actions that utility doesn't. Still, it doesn't mark an advance in explaining other important facts. First of all, it doesn't explain what reason there is for choosing certain policies, nor the effects that those policies can have on relations of trust among governments, representatives, and citizens. Nor, finally, can it explain the reasons for political discourse.

The second theoretical focus concerns the phenomenon of *rituality*.[22]

21. Parsons has illustrated this. His reasoning: Rational voter choice, that is, a choice oriented toward using the vote to obtain benefits, is inconceivable, because the common voter is unable to know which policies will lead to the greater welfare of the country. Finding himself facing a serious and difficult choice, but not being able to control all its data and therefore assuming the aspect of an act of faith, the voter chooses to reinforce the tie of solidarity that unites him with a certain group. Thus, he recovers the security that he lost facing an uncertain choice. Cf. T. Parsons, "Voting and the Equilibrium of the American Political System," in *Sociological Theory and Modern Society* (New York, 1967), pp. 223-263.

22. The texts to which I refer here and in the following paragraph are primarily M. Edelmann, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Chicago, 1964); J.R. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade* (Chicago, 1963); J.D. Sironneau, *Sécularisation et religions politiques* (The Hague, 1982); and S. Verba, "The Kennedy Assassination and the Nature of Political Commitment," in B.S. Greenberg and B. Parker, eds., *The Kennedy Assassination and the American Public* (Stanford, 1965) and the response to him by L. Lipsitz, "If, as Verba Says, The State Functions as a Religion, What Are We to Do Then to Save Our Souls?" in *American Political Science Review*, 62:1-2 (1968), pp. 527-535.

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Rituality exists above all in politics. Certain facts openly present themselves as rites (ceremonies, festivals, holidays, solemn public observances, etc.), and it is difficult to explain them in utilitarian terms. Even events that don't appear to be rituals — since officially they may have ulterior consequences — can still be regarded as rituals if those consequences only occur exceptionally. Elections themselves can be ritualistic if they fail to bring about the programs that they would have to in order to represent a true choice. And so on, naturally, for political meetings and the like. But this doesn't exhaust the field: other, more subtle rituals can hide in political phenomena. Think here of such things as conventions, committees, parliamentary hearings. Think also of certain actions that appear to be aimed at tangible results, but which are in fact wholly sterile.[23]

For the individual, ritual can have a symbolic reassuring effect at moments of uncertainty, estrangement, and so forth. From this viewpoint, the presence of ritual in political institutions is explained by the literature we've noted. In reality, it is more accurate to consider ritual a reinforcement of solidarity, in the sense that it gives solidarity a dimension of temporal duration. The rite is repetition, a sign of persistence and lasting collective agreement — a sign, that is, of identity of the self with a collectivity *through time*. Simultaneously, it is characteristic of certain aspects of the rite to give birth to a language. Repetition of the formulas or terms attributes to them meanings typical of political language, and, indeed, turns them into the political language of that particular collectivity, as distinct from other collectivities (other groups, parties, movements, nations and so forth).

Thus, by considering ritual, it is possible to go beyond the simple observation that solidarity is a component of political choices. Thanks to ritual and to its specific language, political activity (political discourse in the general sense) is seen to be capable of establishing collective identity through time.

On the other hand, still unexplained is how the function of alotting real benefits belongs to politics, which traditionally, or at least since the beginning of profound state intervention in the market, appears to be characteristic of it.

Ritual, regarded as a symbol, is almost itself a means for the other two components of politics: solidarity, which we have examined, and theatricality, which we examine now, and which uses rituality as spectacle. Who hasn't witnessed politics as theater, as spectacle? Reading about political events in the newspapers or seeing them on television is, for the enormous majority of the population, no different than reading and listening to what's happening in sports. We are informed, made to witness, without being able to participate. Enthusiasm is worked up for this or that actual participant, even though we know that we aren't able to help him except by applause. Indeed, elections can seem at times to be mere applause meters that expel from the stage the amateur actors in order to give place to other, more able ones. That politicians might have to be actors as well was no secret even before an actor became head of the most powerful nation on the planet. But let's not get trapped in a

23. Cf. Edelmann, *op.cit.*, chapter II.

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metaphor here, even though it is a pregnant one. There are more specific and observable facts that can be explained only if one uses something similar to a model (and not simply a metaphor) of "political theatricality."

Consider again the neo-utilitarian scenario of the political process: A certain interest asks to be satisfied by means of politics; the neo-utilitarian answers: Yes, if the majority can agree on a certain measure, which will satisfy the original interest and restore equanimity. But events rarely happen this way. The satisfaction of a certain group interest, instead of quieting that interest, might instead be followed by increased demands. Or the demand (especially if it is made by masses of the population) is enthusiastically embraced, but the political system's response takes the form of merely symbolic assurances and, although they do not really satisfy the demand, manage to stifle the enthusiasm and quell the demand, even if it remains unsatisfied. Equanimity is restored, not because the requested tangible benefits have been distributed, but as a result of a form of symbolic representation.

Because expanding demands seem to be more likely when the interests of small organized groups are at stake, while symbolic quiescence occurs when mass movements are involved, the picture of the political system that emerges can be described in this way: On the stage, before the public, and according to the rules of the democratic game, characters present their demands. Benefits are allotted to them that seem tangible enough to the public, but which in fact are nothing more than symbols. Behind the scenes, though, more or less unobserved by the public, move petty and powerful characters (the interest groups), who contend for the bulk of the collective wealth.

Such is the theatrical model of politics. Is it only suggestive, or can it also explain things? Certainly it accounts for the developments listed at the beginning of this article that utilitarian theory doesn't explain: the powerlessness and incompetence of people interested in politics, the frustrations of demands that are apparently accepted, but then swallowed up, the cycles of enthusiasm and indifference toward certain political themes, the collusion between parties. And, unlike the analyses that focus on ritual and solidarity, this model makes a place for political functions (or at least legislative measures) in the relation between citizens and representatives. But, as we have seen, it makes room only for what the measures represent, not for the benefits that they can effectively deliver.

By including the model or the metaphor of the theater, the vision of politics as symbol seems to put the crowning touch on the attempt to develop an alternative theory to utilitarianism. But, in reality, it is not a true alternative, but rather a complement to another theory. Symbolic goods are added to tangible goods,[24] and they go about together in the political marketplace. What this suggests is a division of labor between those who look after the tangible goods and those who attend to the symbolic goods. Putting the best face on this, the experts (administrators and major party leaders) paternalistically look after

24. For an analysis of this distinction, cf. R.E. Goodin, "Symbolic Rewards: Being Bought Off Cheaply," in *Political Studies*, 25:3 (1977).

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the tangible goods with an eye to achieving the collective good, choosing from time to time the means most suitable, all the while, however, maintaining that it is useless to discuss the importance of their choices with the public, which is hopelessly inexpert. The symbolic goods, allotted by representatives of democratic politics, would help achieve the necessary identification of the public with the national community. Their distribution helps avoid the confusion that the masses' participation would introduce into the collective decisions. In a cruder version, the representatives of the dominant interests would look after the tangible goods; the politicians would act out their democratic representation in order to keep the public away from the operations of power. In both of these scenarios there is more realism than in the utilitarians' simplifications. But must we be satisfied with this?

Consider some circumstances. The success of the administrators (according to the optimistic version) in achieving the collective good cannot be constant, unchanging. Every indicator we choose to look at in measuring success will show variations, which, obviously, will have effects on the allotment of tangible goods. Will it follow, then, that if fewer tangible goods are distributed (less disposable income per capita, for example, which seems to be the principal factor in the economic election cycle), it will be necessary to distribute more symbolic goods (prestigious international victories or the expansion of government to include representatives of wider strata)? But what is the point of exchanging symbolic goods for tangible ones? And, for that matter, how exactly can they be distinguished from each other? Imagine, for example, that an ethnic minority protests because its identity isn't sufficiently acknowledged by the rest of the national community: is the answer to make more investments in the region where it lives, or is it acceptable to make its language part of the schools' curriculum? Which of these two is the symbolic and which the tangible benefit? Which one will have the greater influence on the minority's position in society?

In other words, whoever uses the concept of symbolic goods tends to run into the same error as those who rely on the concept of utility. It stops where the individual *appears* to reap the good, and it doesn't ask which conditions are structurally necessary for that harvest to occur in fact. This emerges more clearly in the use of the concept of the symbol. What will ever be able to represent a symbolic good for the individual if its contents aren't recognized by others? What good is a medal, for example, if no one else knows what it symbolizes? In fact, the symbol cannot exist other than by subjective recognition. But is utility any different?

4. Rationality, Representation, Conflict

Up to now, the critique has failed to address three types of problems. The first concerns the rationality of individual choice. The second concerns the nature of the different roles in politics — those of citizens and those of politicians — and their connection, that is, the process of representation. Finally, there is the problem of the distinctions, and hence the conflicts, between political parties. We examine these now.

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4.1 The Rationality of Individual Choice

We have seen that the concept of rational choice proposed by the neo-utilitarians is inadequate to explain actions so relevant to voting such as the effort of voters to inform themselves, the work done by the "foot soldiers" in movements and parties, and the decision to make a career out of politics. This derives from the wide latitude that the notion of costs has to have in the utilitarian view. Everything that is not a function of benefits produced by political measures but which is undertaken in order to achieve these benefits necessarily becomes a cost. From this it follows that politics knows no other source of value than political measures (decisions of political authorities) and that political values and social values are incommensurable. In fact, consider the case of the individual who aims at improving his social position within a particular society's dominant value scale. He can do one of three things: He can work alone (undertake more work, show more enterprise in the market, etc.); he can organize politically with others who share his ends, seeking to get the government to improve his and his companions' position; or he can change the scale of values that determines his social rank relative to others (for example, change the esteem in which manual labor is held; change ethnic prejudices; and so on). To choose, he will have to be able to compare the costs he will incur in each of the three courses of action. How can he do this if he doesn't have a criterion of value that is common to all three?

These considerations knock out the already weak, customary reply of every equilibrium theory (the theory that limits itself to studying the compromises relative to a certain kind of goods, given a certain distribution of preferences, and which wants to determine on this basis how to stabilize the equilibrium). But, apart from the empirical observations noted earlier — that satisfaction does not always silence demand, and that quiescence of demand can occur without needs being satisfied — one cannot accept the view that all methods of achieving equilibrium are equivalent. Recall the example mentioned earlier that at least two processes of satisfying political demand entail quite different results: Those that leave the structure of needs intact, and those that modify them. More and more now, political activity concerns the modification of needs much more than the simple satisfaction of existing needs.

These criticisms of utilitarian analyses of political interests add to the various criticisms of utilitarianism made elsewhere (such as the impossibility of having a social theory of the causes of preferences, the unreality of the assumption about the transitivity of preferences, a notion that is necessary, however, if one is to use the concept of utility).

An alternative conception, much more useful for the study of politics, starts from the obvious observation that needs are socially induced and considers that their satisfaction is social, too — that is, that it comes about through an explicit or implicit social comparison. Hence, satisfaction of needs is not flattened into an always equivalent reconstruction of the equilibrium, but rather is seen to vary according to the modification that it brings to the social position of the individual it affects. The value of a good, in fact, cannot reside solely in

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the utility that the individual believes he derives from it, but must be intersubjectively recognizable. The individual must be able to consult others in order to check if the value he gives to that good may not be an illusion (think again of the medal, or of acquisitions, even tangible ones, that serve to confer prestige, status, power, etc.). In other words, to speak of the utility of a good entails the idea of intersubjective recognition.

The political process comes to be seen then as a passage from demand to political action, which can be either a legislative measure, a persuasive of ideological speech, that in turn leads to the modification of the relative position of an individual or group in a system of social relations. The idea of interest, therefore, refers not to the goal of satisfying desires nor to preferences nor to needs, but rather to the goal of advancing or defending the relative position of a social agent (measured according to given values) in a system of relations.

One of the first consequences of this way of looking at things is to modify the distinction between symbolic and tangible goods. Consider the alternatives: Distribution of money or medals for valorous service; of territorial investments or linguistic rights to ethnic minorities; of higher wages or representation of the working class in the government. In each case, the difference between the first and the second member of the pairs is not that the first one is tangible and the second symbolic, but that it has different implications for the system of relations in which the interested subjects participate. To distribute monetary rewards, territorial investments (within limits, of course) and higher wages means to distribute benefits that can be used individually by the beneficiaries in a particular system, namely, the market; here they can circulate with their identity as bearers of something having monetary value. The market is the collective entity or the system of relations within which their identity comes to be recognized. The concept of individual liberty stems, at least in part, from this idea of a collective entity to which an individual can at any time claim to belong and in which he can move as he pleases with the certainty of being acknowledged — a condition that, in the market, makes the exchange of goods possible. But if, instead of market goods, something like medals, linguistic rights, or government posts are doled out, the interested parties, in order to enjoy these benefits, have to maintain a social identity consistent with them. That is, they have to maintain membership in the collective entity that will acknowledge them. The veteran must remain a member of a patriotic collectivity; the spokesman for the minority will have to remain in communication with that minority; and the worker who has obtained a government post will have to remain a disciple of his party. The difference, you see, will not be between the tangible and the symbolic, or between satisfaction and a run-around, but between consequences that differ depending on the individuals' positions in one or another social system.

A parallel criticism can be made by analyzing the process of calculating utility. In order to evaluate his own interest in a certain objective, the subject has to assume that his criteria of evaluation (or, in the language of economics,

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the order of his preferences) will be identical when he appraises the costs and when he enjoys the benefits. This is plausible either if the two moments are simultaneous, or if there exists a conversion formula to determine their worth (which, in economics, is money) that is relatively constant or whose variations can be predicted. In other words, the subject has to assume his own identity through time — but after Hume there can be no doubt that this is logically impossible on the basis of what is given solely to the individual. The identity of an individual can consist in the *identifiability* of him by other individuals (a group, a public, any collective entity, a system of relations). In order to evaluate interests — that is, to calculate costs and benefits — the calculating subject has to be assured of an *identifying collectivity*. From this he will obtain the criteria that allow him to define interests — the criteria, in other words, that permit him to give meaning to actions. Now, a comprehensive theory of politics must be able to give an account of the activity that establishes identifying collectivities; in effect, an account of politics. The function served by allocating benefits cannot exclude the existence of an identifying collectivity but rather must be based on precisely this and carried out within the boundaries of this identity.[25]

Taking account of this leads to an understanding of how political participation can occur (which, everything considered, goes on all the time) while avoiding the iron laws of free-riding. If an action does not have as its goal procuring the benefits of a certain piece of legislation but aims instead at realizing a collective identity, that action will be an end in itself and therefore will be costless. That is, by staying at home or by refusing to inform ourselves, we won't thereby dodge costs.

Here also, eventually, the choice will be between two kinds of identification (for example, with the family, with the party, etc.). It will not be possible to leave it for others to do (the free ride), if the "doing" in question is a way for the individual to be recognized and hence, in reality is considered an end and not a means. It thus becomes possible to understand why, to the question "Why should I go and vote, knowing it won't matter?" the most common rebuttal is, "But what if everyone were to do that?" This shows that whoever performs this singularly useless act considers it an act of collective identification; it would be in vain, not because it isn't an efficient means to some end (since it isn't a means) were it not performed simultaneously and ritualistically also by other members of a particular collectivity to whom the act of voting is proof of belonging.

No one believes that a single vote can decide the election of a candidate; but if it can give a little extra indication of a party's strength, of a collective posi-

25. I have presented elsewhere the steps that lead up to this; cf. my "Introduzione allo studio della partecipazione politica," *Quaderni di Sociologia*, 15:3-4 (1966), pp. 235-286; and my "Political Exchange and Collective Identity in Industrial Conflict," in Crouch and Pizzorno, eds., *The Resurgence of Class Conflict in Western Europe since 1968* (London, 1978). For an original analysis of those positions, comparing them to Habermas's, cf. F.W. Reis, "Representation and the Autonomy of the Political," a speech delivered at the World Congress of the International Political Science Association, Rio de Janeiro, 1982.

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tion, why not broadcast it?[26] And even the fact that this behavior is sensitive to certain costs (such as bad weather, distance from the polls, complexity of information — as, for example, in the case of American elections) can be rethought. In fact, what is calculated in terms of costs and advantages is not the probability of producing future measures, but rather the value of the evidence the voter provides by casting his ballot. That is, the variations in electoral participation vary with the significance of that evidence — in other words, with the intensity of the political obligation — and not with swings in the probability of achieving benefits. Consider the costs of voting despite the greatest costs (for example, physical threats) or despite the probability that the access to power of a favored candidate may be cut off. These facts can be explained with the theory of identification, but not with the theory of utility.

It shouldn't be necessary to show how the same arguments apply with even greater force to the phenomena of political participation in the wider sense, party militancy, etc. Instead, we will turn our attention now to the phenomenon of political information, seeking to clarify the distinction between "political discourse" and "action."

According to the neo-utilitarian theories, the transmission of political information helps citizens choose while permitting politicians to compete in orienting citizens' choice. The politicians compete, however, *not* by transmitting false information, but in selecting true information. The abundance of messages and the difficulty of seeing beyond their selectivity makes choice very costly for the citizen. Because of this, it becomes more likely that the voter will "place his trust" in certain sources or, more fundamentally, in certain more general ideological principles, accepting for himself the choices that will be proposed by these sources.

This description is not far from one that can be offered using the theory of identification. The quality of "being informed" occurs within an environment of membership (since if the voter is not recognized, if he doesn't communicate, he is rarely also "informed"). Thus, he is the producer of his own identification and this capacity of his prods politicians to create images he can both easily identify (for example, by making the politician's picture instantly recognizable) and identify with. In this fashion, the politician seeks, by acting theatrically, to establish an audience, a public. The consequences can be unexpected. As the messages may be competitive, even when they are only abundant, information becomes a double-edged sword, having contradictory consequences for the identification that the information sought to bring about. In fact, the competition in information, as it increases, brings about increasing dramatization. Each new item of news is presented in such a way as to cause a stronger impression than whatever came before it. And so the message tends to be increasingly separated from reality. The resulting loss of credibility translates into a loss of trust in whoever is sending the message. This dramatization of information, therefore, helps generate public skepticism. From here disaffection for politics spreads, and party identification

26. I owe the introduction of this metaphor to a suggestion of Guillermo O'Donnell.

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becomes more fluid, more fickle.

However, apart from the contradictory effects that political information can have on the process of identification, it is clear that it is a component of the process. And in this regard, it is similar to ideological messages.[27] Both make up parts of a type of action one can call "political discourse" and which can be considered one of the two fundamental analytical components of politics (the other being the decisions of political authorities, which we have referred to as provisions, legislative measures, or simply politics *tout court*).

Political discourse is thus an end in itself, or, better, it is a component of the process of establishing collective identity. It is not merely persuasive activity directed at the production of consensus on positions already formed, but rather, in certain cases, the production of hegemony, in the Gramscian sense of the term.

The answer to the query posed at the beginning of this section is that the logic of individual action in politics cannot be reconstructed as the logic of a choice of means most adequate to achieve given ends, but as the logic of membership action. That is, as a logic of confrontation and conflict between collective identities, modifying considerably the ends of political participation.

4.2 The Two Political Roles and Representation

Now is the time to consider the traditional distinction between one who makes politics, who produces "policies" and political discourse — whom we will call the politician — and one who takes delivery, whom we will call the citizen. The relation between them is, constitutionally, one of representation.

Citizens choose the politician who represents them, or more specifically, who represents their interests. One assumes that, as the utilitarian formula claims, citizens are aware of their own interests (or are the best judges of them) and know how to judge which politicians best represent them. But these two assumptions are not easy to accept.

There is an inevitable tautology when one assimilates the concept of interest to that of preference: Since preferences are deducible solely from choices made, each action performed is the preferred one and so, if interests are indeed nothing more than preferences, every action is also always in one's interest. To avoid this, utilitarians affirm the formula according to which we have no way of knowing if an individual actually knows his interests, but we know at least that no one can know them better than he does. It is their way of placing interests outside ideology, as Marxists do when they claim to have grasped the "true" interest of a class, independent of what its members say or do. But there will always be people who don't know which choice is the one in their interest, so they turn to experts to tell them (be they doctors, psychologists, financial consultants, etc.). In such cases of imperfect information the definition of interest is delegated to others.

In the situations just described, the scarcity of information is not something that can be controlled by the individual agent (the state of his body, in the case

27. Here one can't help but agree with Downs (*op.cit.*) on the continuity of information and ideology.

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of the visit to the doctor, of the stock market, with respect to the financial consultant, and so on). The state of the political system, or the political economy, is no different. So it is only to be expected that voters will frequently delegate to others more expert than they the decision as to what choices are in the voters' interests.

But there is another, more fundamental, uncertainty that concerns identity over time. How long will my present order of preferences, from which I deduce my interest in a certain choice, last? Since every calculation that isn't solved in a brief time is one in which the costs and benefits will be evaluated at different times, am I able to estimate if it's advantageous to incur certain costs now in order to obtain certain benefits in the future? I can calculate gains and losses only if I have some reason to believe that my identity as a bearer of interests won't change. My identity as a bearer of interests is not given, obviously, by my physical identity (which, for that matter, changes over time too) but rather from the constancy of recognition that I verify intersubjectively as coming from social reality, from the collectivities in which I move. Only such recognition allows me to assume that the objectives I achieve contribute to provide a measure of my social standing.

The interminable disputes about the concept of "true interest," about the distinctions between interest and need, interest and preference, and so on, about a possible false consciousness of our own interests, can be clarified with a simple distinction between *short-term* and *long-term* interests. In the short run, the individual agent, when the costs he faces are not far removed from the benefits to be received, knows what he wants and what he must do to obtain what he wants. Meanwhile, in the long run the various separate objectives are immersed in uncertainty, and so are the measures needed to pursue them, as are the incalculable consequences of acting in one way or another. The definition of long-term interest itself is the work of a social process in which the individual participates, always with others, in a way more or less conscious and active, throughout his life, without ever being able to confirm that on the horizon the ends are clear. There are no *a priori* reasons to reject the unlimited psychoanalytic regression of reasons, nor that of the revolutionary regression of reasons in reconstructing the "true" interests of an individual or a class. It is an open-ended process and certainly it involves politics in any case; or, better, that aspect of political activity that we have defined as constitutive of collective identity — from which come long-term interests.

The distinction between short- and long-term interests cannot be obtained solely by means of ordinary thought or from that of therapy or ideology. It is rooted in the very constitutional practice of democratic-liberal governments, whose theoreticians just do not seem to recognize it. Take the case of the modern notion of political representation — "independent representation," as it is called, in contrast to "mandated representation," which is revocable representation typical of medieval constitutions. In the latter, the representative is subject to the instructions of the people, while modern constitutions generally leave the representative free to interpret the interests of his constituents,

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and no one can make him carry out a mandate. His task is to interpret the particular interests of the people who elected him, in light of the general interests of the nation. But the nation's interests are declared by the majority. Why would he ever have to burden himself with the particular interests of his constituents? He wouldn't — unless he assumes that there is a common interest that isn't reducible to that of the majority. But then the whole representative procedure would become contradictory. The only way to make sense of this inconsistency is to consider that the "light" which illuminates the representative's interpretation comes from the long run. So, the representative has a greater capability to know the long-term interests of his constituents and is elected by virtue of this. It can be an ideological knowledge, based on a general interpretation of how the system will react to actions taken in order to achieve certain objectives. Or it can be expert knowledge of the economic system, the social system, or the international system. It can be knowledge acquired in the negotiation processes in which decisions are made, a knowledge that enables an expert to evaluate the probability of achieving certain objectives in light of the force that antagonistic objectives reveal. And one or all of these reasons account for the incontrovertible fact that in mordern politics, the representative acts under the assumption, constitutionally sanctioned by the absence of a mandate, that he knows more than the people he represents, knows better than they do their "true" interests. Here, moreover, the assumption is that choosing the better policy for the long run is what makes the contradictions of particular interests disappear. In other words, the existence or the realizability of a common interest is assumed for the future, not for the present, in which antagonistic interests remain inscribed in rep-representative practice. Naturally conceptions may vary as to what the form of a common interest will be, but it is just a divergence of conceptions, not of interests. So, if the distinction between short-term and long-term interests is so clearly legible in the constitutional practice of modern liberal democracy, then the idea of a politics that is a constructor of identity before it is an allocator of benefits is more consistent with this form of government than many of its interpreters would have us believe.

If more confirmation is still needed, consider the function constitutions have in modern states — namely, to legitimate the principle of the majority. It is a function that is exercised, at least in decisions of fundamental importance, in the name of a collectivity that endures through time, and hence is more far-reaching and legitimate than any particular identity living at a particular moment. A collectivity that has an identity over a long period is the bearer of common interests.

Finally, the categorical distinction between long-term and short-term interests can be elaborated if we re-analyze the conditions of individual choice. The distinction is founded, we recall, upon the presence (for long-term interests) or absence (for short-term interests) of uncertainty. This uncertainty concerns the possibility of the individual agent's seeing his acquisitions (satisfactions of needs, benefits, recompense, etc.) being intersubjectively recog-

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nized; hence, it is essentially uncertainty concerning the stability of a common value reference. In other words, if what we fear is that our self-worth won't be acknowledged (the significance of our identity), and we are uncertain of the effects of courses of action that present themselves to us for a choice, we will minimize the uncertainty by identifying ourselves with a collectivity, searching, that is, for a stable acknowledgement of our identity, one indifferent to failures, undisturbed by questioning and personal defeat. The more uncertain a person is about a given course of action, the more important it will be to stick with a collective entity capable of determining future ends, and one on whose behalf he will work to make sure it is stable and lasting.

As said before, it is clear that the orientation of the individual to his own interest — if it still makes sense to use this term — is a more complex phenomenon that can be deduced from utilitarian theories. An analogous complexity may be found in the relation between citizen and politician, i.e., in the relation of representation. In fact, one can no longer think that we can rely on the mere calculus that the citizen can make of the expected utility that will flow to him due to the government action of the politician. That is, one can no longer propose to fix the character of the politician as one who represents interests, or as a producer of policies that can be assessed in terms of represented interests. Both of these guises presuppose that the politicians' service is aimed at the citizens of a society in which the interests are given and structured before the politician intervenes. In reality, political action, rooted in collective identity, is aimed at defining and continually redefining interests.

In order to specify better how such activity develops, we can distinguish two types of it, "identifying" and "instrumental" activity.

In identifying activity, the politician carries out the task of making, preserving, reinforcing the collective identities that appear on the political stage in their multiple forms (groups, parties, movements, associations, states, etc.). Such activity consists in producing symbols that help members of a given collective recognize themselves, communicate among themselves their solidarity, agree on collective action. Thus, they produce in a more or less explicit way the ideologies and the various interpretations of them from which come the definitions of the long-run orientations assigned to collective action. Thus, they establish the marks that distinguish one collective identity from another. In this sense, politicians are the caretakers of a language that distinguishes itself quite strongly from common speech. When information about social events and states of opinion is translated into this, it acquires political meaning. This is what we've called a political discourse, which is not made, obviously, only of words and messages, of information, persuasion and ideology, but also of models of relations, of exemplary actions, of suggested emotions, and other similar things. Therefore, the merit of the politician engaged in such identifying activities does not consist merely in his mastery of the symbolic language, his propagandistic and proselytizing persuasiveness, but also his knowledge of how to inspire trust and how to generate solidarity, the capacity to establish lasting and intense loyalties, that may be, at

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least in part, independent of real contexts or proposed decisions of the government.

In instrumental activity, on the other hand, politicians make decisions that are directly intended to improve or preserve the relative position of the collective body that they represent. This can be accomplished either by using their command of political authority or through negotiation, creating alliances and coalitions, or confrontation, which enables politicians to compete head-to-head. Here the politician's merit is his ability to get things done, through state organs or procedures: administrative professionalism, negotiating shrewdness, legal experience, and the like matter here. It is assumed also that the ends are already fixed and shared by the collectivity to which the politician belongs, and that they are not up at that time for the politician to reformulate or re-elaborate.

The distinction between identification and instrument is analytic. The two components coexist in the same person and are complementary. But their influence varies, so that they constitute dimensions that can be used to classify possible political forms. Notwithstanding their complementarity, one can speak of a pre-eminence of identification over instrumentality. A group with strong identification can last a long time even if it doesn't gain power or achieve victory in confrontations with its adversaries. (Think of the socialist and communist parties for long periods of their history.) The inverse situation isn't imaginable: How can power be conquered with identification? For whom? We seem to be drawing nearer to the possibility of an administrative government, but this is illusory. If this does occur, it will only mean collective identification with the state.

This last point illustrates that both identification and instrumentality can be seen in relation to a part of the state (group, party, movement, etc.) or in relation to the state as a whole. In the first case, identification is used to strengthen a part, and instrumentality is used when that part seeks victory in confrontations with other parts. In the second case, identification and instrumentality are used to strengthen the position of the state *vis-à-vis* other states. To see how this works, consider once again the example of an economic policy oriented to the election cycle — aiming, that is, at improving the economic indicators in the period before the election to the neglect of long-term effects: The success of such a policy will reflect party instrumentality, obviously not that of the state.

The primacy of activity aimed at strengthening identification warns us also of the limits of the concept of political barter. To say that a politician pushes for legislation in order to obtain the vote of certain social groups is true, but only part of the story, for it overlooks the process through which these groups are formed and have become capable of political trade-offs. And the way this process occurs is much like any other type of trade. To imagine that it is enough to promise or even to pass measures for pensioners in order to get their vote overlooks the fact that the pensioners have to be induced to inform themselves; that they must be able to discriminate between alternative pro-

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grams; that they must be induced to vote; that they must have confidence in the person who makes the promises or gratitude to whomever has procured the measures (confidence and gratitude not being part of the normal exchange situation). This is a process of identification that changes the social class of pensioners into something else. It changes its size, because certainly not the whole class will vote in the same way. Most of all, the class will redefine its interests, imposing operable political terms. Only after reconstructing the way this process comes about, or at least understanding it, will it be possible to speak of exchanges of political resources. And only then, in turn, will it be possible to understand how these resources can be evaluated.

4.3 Choice or Conflict?

Democratic governments offer citizens the possibility of choosing between two or more parties competing with each other. Why? The utilitarian answer is that the presence of an alternative allows citizens to choose the better policy, defined as the one more likely to procure their utility. In the first stages of liberal governments there were very few voters and the effects of the government's fiscal and economic action was on proprietary interests. It was easy then for voters to understand this and the utilitarian theory of choice seemed realistic enough. But we have seen how it became untenable when the vote of the single citizen vanished in huge numbers, when the mass of information blunted every discriminatory capacity of the mind; when the degree and the sophistication of government intervention grew; and when the government's place in an uncontrollable international context makes it practically impossible even for experts to evaluate the consequences of a choice.

Identification theory might observe, however, that party competition in democratic governments isn't over who has the best policies, but is used, instead, to strengthen collective identities. Therefore, one doesn't have competition, but conflict, analogous to some extent to the conflict that divides states. Now this might be true, but to reach such a conclusion, a series of questions must be clarified.

If it is characteristic of politics to define the long-term interests and in so doing to construct a collective identity, why isn't this function wholly assumed by the national collectivity, that is, by the state? In certain cases this is exactly what happens, but not in democratic-liberal states. Why? The traditional answer is that in the latter, there exist social forces — essentially those based on private property and religion — that were not compatible with the individual's complete identification with the state. But if this were the whole story, it would follow that the political parties would have to represent economic and religious interests, which they do not. Even when there might be a partial correspondence with these interests, a party, in its discourse and even more in its decisions, will never be the simple expression of certain interests. The political collective identity, as we have seen, doesn't simply gather preexisting social interests; it selects them, it molds them, it invents them, it ignores them.[28]

28. It is strange — and revealing of the reigning, individualistic, methodological conformism

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A different answer to the question about the persistence of political identification in democratic-liberal governments can be reached using the following scheme: Given a society in which divergent social powers are present and capable, if necessary, of resisting the military-political power of the state (essentially the powers based on capitalistic property and religious affiliation), there can be a workable national political community only if these powers are politicized and if the social conflict becomes political. What this means is that conflict becomes governed by procedure and becomes a way of reinforcing collective identity rather than a way of regulation by interests. From the first group of liberal politicians who used parliament as an arena of manners[29] to the first democratic politicians who used it as a classroom for didactic ideology, with every social group being represented, the democratic-liberal state has managed to keep at bay threatening social interests, be they economic, religious or other. The process of representation therefore appears essentially as a process of social control in the presence of powers not reducible to the military forces that defend a centralized territory. And this is so not only because representation involves a procedure accepted by the various parties, a common language, or at least a translatable one, and familiarity among representatives, but also because collective identity tends to limit, when it doesn't annul, individual interests.

Hence, although identification with a political faction at times appears to exacerbate the contrast of economic and religious (or cultural) interests, in reality it always transforms them into something different, into political positions that implicitly are ready for procedural treatment. This approach shows how ideologically loaded collective identifications can have a greater function in the life of the state than weak political identifications, which are penetrated by pressure groups and which, as such, are ineffective in controlling interests.

The recognition of different political parties, therefore, has resolved for democratic societies a problem of social control, which otherwise can be managed only militarily. And it has been able to do this as though it were a matter of political procedure, even though in reality it has worked, by means of political conflict, as a technique for strengthening various identifications as well as fostering a predisposition to negotiate. Moreover, the potential conflict of political positions turns political discourse (at least a good part of it) into ideological discourse, that is, into a discourse that tries to be more comprehensive (more global, more universal) than the adversaries'. In this way, therefore, the discourse addresses interests that have more to do with the long run than the short, more to do with hypothetical conquests than immediate satisfactions. And this, too, serves to control, by means of political conflict, the more urgent social interests.

Democratic competition, then, does not appear so much as a choice among

— that so astute an analyst as Elster needs long, highly refined neo-utilitarian reasoning to reach these conclusions; and then he stops. Cf. J. Elster, "Sour Grapes: Utilitarianism and the Genesis of Wants," in Sen and Williams, eds., *Utilitarianism and Beyond* (London, 1982).

29. Cf. L. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (London, 1957).

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various political programs so much as it seems a conflict of collective identities that are ideologically irreducible and constrained to engage in daily negotiation and trade-off with each other.

5. Conclusions

The neo-utilitarian theories of rational choice try to construct a theory of politics that adopts, according to the words of one of its major exponents, "the traditional method of prediction and analysis." This implies that "if a theoretical observer knows an actor's ends, he can predict the actions that he will perform to achieve them in the following way: (1) He will calculate the most reasonable way that the actor has for achieving those ends and (2) will assume that the actor will really make that choice because he is rational."[30] It isn't enough to criticize a theory like this by simply noting that it isn't realistic to assume that the individual is isolated from society, that it is necessary to consider the social origin of needs, and so on, since obviously the theory's exponents are aware of these considerations. To overcome such a theory it is necessary to hold off judging its premises and to let ourselves be guided by our own reasoning until there emerge certain relevant facts that this theory cannot explain and certain logical contradictions that it cannot resolve. In this fashion will emerge the principles for a different theory, even if it doesn't turn out to be a symmetrical alternative.

To summarize these principles: We maintain that no one can have the concept of utility without implying the intersubjective acknowledgement of the values that this utility realizes. Hence, the processes of satisfying needs will vary according to the different collective identities that support or acknowledge them. An individual's calculation of the effects of a certain action is possible, at least without great difficulty, only if its costs and benefits are to be realized over a relatively short time. If the calculation is made for the distant future, it isn't possible even to demonstrate that the individual himself will be unchanged over time, that his preferences and his criteria for calculating the value of the costs and the benefits will remain constant. Every human experience not taken lightly confirms for us how readily that identity may be threatened. Its security, its stability, are sought in collective identification; and the individual perceives himself as identical over time only if others perceive him that way. Uncertainty is erased when it is shared. From this comes the importance of distinguishing between the calculation of our own short-term and long-term interests.

In order to explain political action, therefore, the logic of utility is replaced by the logic of identification. This is not laid down as a basis for a symmetrically alternative theory to utilitarianism, nor can it obviously be reduced to quantitative treatment. (Even in the logic of utility the algebraic formulas are used exclusively in formalizing the reasoning and do not lead, as we have seen, to exact quantitative models of reality.) Identification theory explains in a consistent manner facts that the other theory cannot, and it describes in a

30. Downs, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

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generalizable manner the citizen's motivation and that of the politician. Both those who vote and those who struggle for political power aim (for quite different reasons) at securing for themselves recognition by a collective identity. For the theorist, it is important to identify and describe what the object of such labors might be: A group of friends, a political party, the national community, an external, universalistic collectivity transcending national borders, or something else. The theoretical gain comes in the approach to a typology and an eventual historical description of the forms of this identity. In other words, the theorist will be able to make a structural analysis instead of one based on equilibrium, an analysis based on identification instead of one based on interest.

Consider a simple case: The diversity of the types of parties in different national contexts. One way of explaining this is by referring to the different interest structures in the various countries considered, while the different politics they pursued would be explained in terms of their utility for the voters. But this would not explain, for example, the presence of religious parties. Nor would it explain, for example, the difference between parties representing equivalent interests, such as the interests of the working class, which the Democratic Party represents in the U.S., the Labour Party in Britain, the Communist Party in Italy, the Social Democrats in Sweden, and the Peronists in Argentina, to name but a few. It isn't possible to deduce from the interests a given party represents the exact meaning that choosing those interests has for the party members. It is probable that on being elected to the government, all those parties would tend to govern the economy in a similar way (and there is abundant data to suggest this). But in the way they shape political identity and therefore define the political roles of their members, the parties listed above belong to different types. Within each type, as well, are to be found parties that represent diverse interests. If this is so, the types that appear in a given society are explained by the structure of the identities present. This means, of course, including not only economic aggregations based on production relations, but also religious, ethnic, and other movements. Those movements resulting from traditional politics itself give way to forms of cultural transmission by collective identities (political subcultures, etc.); and these, in certain contexts, explain most of the variations. A phenomenon as striking as the persistence of the electoral geography in most of the European countries over the last 60 to 80, even 90 years, which has lasted even through a time of the most radical transformations in the structure of the economy and institutions, cannot be explained by the structure of interests alone and without direct recourse to a theory of identification.[31]

31. An interesting demonstration of how party identification may not be reducible to the choice of policies, using the analysis of equilibrium, is found in an unpublished manuscript of A. Przeworski and I. Sprague, "Party Strategy, Class Ideology and Individual Voting: A Theory of Electoral Socialism" (1982). It is possible to interpret the results of their analysis of more than half a century of socialist votes in 12 countries as follows: The fewer financial resources a party has, the more it must use militant or ideological resources, and the more it will hold on to identification symbols instead of offering undifferentiated (non-ideological) policies. A demonstration of how the different intensity of identifications influences electoral participation is to be found in Verba *et al., op.cit.*

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Researchers on voting acknowledge this and use the concept of party identification, but only as a residual category. If, for example, there are a hundred voters who say they don't approve of the governing party's economic policy (or who claim they're being damaged by it) and 70 say that in the next election they will vote against that party while 30 say they will continue to vote for it, the behavior of the 70 will be explained with reference to the theory of rational choice, while that of the 30 will be attributed to party identification. But this is obviously an ad hoc explanation. The difference between the two groups is that between two identifications. The 30 submit to party identification (or more likely to whatever small group is at the time leading the party); the 70 can be either citizen judges who act by negative identification, or they submit to a stronger national identification and evaluate policies in terms of what is best for that collective.

Does this theory of identification belong to theories of the kind that proclaim the autonomy of politics or the political sphere? These were theories that sprang from the Marxist tradition in order to be liberated from that part of Marxism that established a causal connection between structures of interest and state action. Some of them tend now to give way to true and proper doctrinal parties that, aiming at differentiating themselves from the others, counterpose, with confused concepts and horrendous names, their theories of "state-centeredness" to the "society-centeredness" of their opponents. We have to keep our distance from all this.

To analyze political phenomena on the basis of identification structures traceable in a certain society means, on the one hand, not to sever, but to underline, the connections between the non-political social relations and those formed by political action. These connections, on the other hand, are also formed by the effects that political action (legislative measures and political discourse) have on the collective identifications that in turn shape society. If there is a special power of politics, it is the power to bind. By means of discourse, the inducement of trust, persuasion, and conversion, and finally by decisions of the authorities, political action mobilizes, constructs new identities and binds individuals together, in ways strong or tenuous, long-lasting or fleeting.

At the beginning we asked if democracy can be considered the government that best satisfies a society's current interests. We have seen that there is no non-tautological way to answer this. Whoever has tried it hasn't succeeded, either because he has oversimplified reality or because he has run into unavoidable contradictions. On what values is it then possible to ground democratic choice?

Probably we should begin to revise our ideas about the relation between democracy and modern society. Classical theories reflect the emergence of democracy from the structural force (generally derived from the production relations) of certain components of capitalist society (the bourgeois class in the beginning, the working class later) which did not allow them to be put under the administrative command of the state. Functionalist theories see the

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development of liberal and democratic institutions not as the conquest of classes and social groups, but rather as the set of mechanisms (individual rights, representation, etc.) best able to solve the problems of a complex, individualistic society based on private property and a free labor market. The conception that was sketched out in this article considers political democracy a form of social control in which essential social resources (such as ownership of capital goods and of labor, and of the right to religious identification) shunned military-administrative authority. It is in a certain sense in order to remedy this disjuncture that a new social activity has taken on itself the task of "politicizing" collective identification, that is, to involve it with military-administrative power. For this there had to emerge a procedure, reciprocal acknowledgements, negotiations, to reduce the threat of disruptive antagonism and to make players out of enemies. The procedural solidarity so constituted has allowed enemies to be defined either as those found outside the borders or those who are not considered sufficiently responsible to be admitted to the system.

If democracy is nothing more than a set of mechanisms for social control, why accept it other than as an expedient? The answer is that there is a value that it alone realizes: It isn't the freedom of political choice (we have shown that is illusory) but freedom of political identification. That is, the right that these identifications have to exist, their right not to be nullified or even determined solely by the authority of the national state. This freedom, in our hypothesis, came into being as a convenient solution at the moment when traditional identifications were dissolving and weakening. It was a way of retaking possession of the terms of a minimum sociality from populations that either took advantage of a very primitive individualism or suffered while others did. They were then entrusted with control of the apparatuses of governmental administration that were as yet not equipped to undertake very stringent control. That liberty, born as an instrument, became a value. On the other side, the governments of contemporary society have developed instruments of control more efficacious than those entrusted to free play and to the reciprocal acknowledgements of the social parts. And on these more efficacious instruments they place ever greater reliance.

At this time, anyone seriously considering a career in politics would be well advised to study theater.

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BEYOND THE CULTURE OF WAR*

by Carla Pasquinelli

Tolstoy wondered why, when Napoleon uttered certain words, six hundred thousand men went into battle. More simply, why do wars gather consensus? Although unwilling to take his contemporaries' explanations seriously, Tolstoy only managed to conclude that such events cannot be rationally understood.[1] Wars have no reason, even though there are always various reasons for waging them and rational motives to legitimate them. As Clausewitz put it, "If war is an act of force, emotions cannot fail to be involved."[2] Which emotions, however, he does not say. There is one emotion, though — the need people have to feel "at home," to have a reassuring group identity — that may provide the answer to Tolstoy's query. This is that special feeling of belonging to a social group, a territory, or a nation, that appears in the clash with the Other. War crystallizes a community's sense of self. Through it, individual historical entities such as peoples, cultures, etc., acquire a sense of identity by entering into a relation with each other. This has been called patriotism.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, however, patriotism does not cause war; rather, the converse is true. Through war, a group becomes aware of itself as a group and gains that sense of togetherness which, since time immemorial, has sustained communities, societies and states. Among other things, identity establishes a visible difference between oneself and the Other. Identification with a higher entity is not enough by itself to create an actual identity; a limit or a border is also necessary. By setting one group against the other, war draws this border. "The only fatality, the only malady which can afflict a group and prevent it from fully realizing its own nature," wrote Levi-Strauss, "is that of being alone."[3]

War regains a sense as a cultural institution that regulates relations among groups, societies and states. It is not an expression of human nature — an innate manifestation of aggressiveness innate in all species according to the sociobiological hypothesis. Obviously, aggressiveness is a part of human nature. How this transpires, however, is controlled by culture rather than genes. War cannot be explained solely in terms of aggressiveness. On the contrary, it is necessary to explain why aggressiveness takes the specific form of organized fighting among groups. Moreover, for all other species, killing is never the aim of aggression. Humans are the only species whose members kill each other and engage in intraspecies aggression. Among animals intraspecies aggression rarely leads to killing a member of one's kind. It is averted

* Originally published in *Problemi del Socialismo*, 2 (May-August 1984), pp. 213-229. Translated by Barbara Baraff.

1. L.N. Tolstoy, *War and Peace* (Chicago, 1962), p. 678.
2. K. von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, 1976), p. 76.
3. C. Levi-Strauss, *Razza e storia* (Turin, 1967), p. 137.

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by the ritualization of the fight. Among men, aggression toward one's own kind is also subject to rules, but only in conflicts with members of the same group. In war, the controls and inhibiting aggression disappear: the killing of fellow members of one's species is foreseen — indeed, is compulsory — solely because they belong to another social group, whereas for animals this happens only during conflicts among different species.

Hence, war eludes biological determinism. It is a form of aggression not found in nature and is typically human. War is a cultural product since it does not heed the biological censors preventing the killing of a member of one's species and because the violence is collective, organized and sporadic.

In a well-known passage from the *1844 Manuscripts*, in order to prove the unnaturalness of alienated labor, Marx argues that it estranges man from his own species. War is like alienated labor: it separates man from his own species. Thus, both of these phenomena are unnatural. And it is precisely this unnaturalness that determines relations among human groups. The Hegelian fight to the death triumphs: "each must aim at the death of the Other as it risks its own life thereby; for that other is to it of no more worth than itself."[4] In war, *homo homini lupus*. Hobbes well understood long ago that war has the characteristics of an interspecies conflict: each man appears to the other as a member of a different species.

War pits two groups against each other, thus revealing their otherness and self-identity. This function of war is linked to the physiognomy of political power, once it grows out of the narrow sphere of kinship. As long as the family constitutes the political unit, belonging to it is enough to define group identity. This is an ascriptive kind of bond, based on the immediacy of kinship relations. Therefore, it need not be supported by solid cultural bases and by a special sense of belonging. Moreover, kinship does not always coincide with blood ties. Among many primitive peoples, anyone can in principle be part of another's family tree through adoption rather than by birth. This possibility of becoming a family member was defined by Maine as "the first and most widespread legal fiction." It owes its existence to the fact that kinship defines group boundaries and identity: not belonging to a family is tantamount to being ostracized from the community. At this level of social organization, the territorial base is irrelevant and war is superfluous: community identity coincides with family genealogy. According to many anthropologies at this stage, there is no war. Conflicts assume the form of individualized fights characterized by chronic antagonism and a succession of vendettas.

The point here is not to locate the origin of war nor to determine whether war began with village settlements and the development of the State, since in societies of hunters and gatherers war does not seem to exist. (If it does, it is not motivated by territorial disputes since such disputes presuppose conditions which rarely exist in these societies, e.g., "the existence of both socially and territorially stable groups."[5]) It is sufficient to point out that war, as we

4. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (London, 1964), p. 223.
5. L. Moruzzi, *La terra "padre"* (Turin, 1983), p. 143.

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know it, came about with the transition from a social organization based on kinship to one based on territory. What transforms an indeterminate space into a social group's territory consists in the fact that the latter has to be defended. Territorialism implies war.

Territorialism is the apportionment of space among social groups. Territory is that area defended by an animal or by a group and territoriality is the intolerance inherent in this division of space. Common to almost all species, territorialism offers some adaptive advantages and promotes a more balanced division of living space. (Living permanently in the same territory makes it easier to know the area's resources and increases possibilities for survival.) However, the partition of space is not always an expression of territorialism since it implies not only a spatial system but also a form of social organization, i.e., group self-identification. For this reason, territory is always an exclusive space. By claiming exclusive right to a territory, the community commits itself automatically to defending it. Thus war delineates borders in such a way that belonging to a territory coincides with belonging to a community. An exclusive territory is experienced by social groups not only as a space for food resources and storage, but, above all, as a space for exercising community rights. Compared to kinship, which was self-sufficient, territory is a much more external element. Through war, however, it is internalized, becoming part and parcel of community identity.

The Nuers are a good example. A people without a state, government or leaders, their sense of community is ensured entirely by territory (even though it is often expressed in terms of lineage). War is the only way to distinguish one Nuer community from another. Each time there is a war, it defines the community identity, which expands and contracts according to the enemy involved. The Nuers do not negotiate and the same groups always unite to fight against one another. The sense of belonging is a reflex unleashed automatically, according to the various levels of war. Each war defines the borders of the community identity.[6] This phenomenon is well-known among sports fans. Died-in-the-wool supporters of local teams readily forget divisions when the national team plays.

Although war is part of the daily experience of primitive societies, it has been ignored by most ethnologists reluctant to part with the ideology of the "noble savage." Those who have studied war often shift their focus to collateral phenomena, such as rites and ways of checking violence. But, as Clastres has pointed out, "to fail to comprehend the function of war is to fail to understand the very nature of savage society."[7] For Clastres, war is the form that primitive sociality takes since it is "not only deeply rooted in primitive society, but is also its way of being a society."[8] War performs an indispensable function, without which there is no society. The presence of the Other, of an antagonistic group, confers on the community its sense of identity and autono-

6. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (New York and Oxford, 1971), pp. 142-143.
7. P. Clastres, *Archeologia della violenza* (Milan, 1982), p. 166.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

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my. Clastres goes on to point out that, as a way of being of societies without a state, war is also the best guarantee against the appearance of a state: it is a device for maintaining equality among a society's members. In fact, far from unifying a society and generating an identity, by introducing inequality the state is rather the death knell of community identity. According to Clastres, Hobbes' only error, "an error almost unavoidable for a man of his time, is believing that if society endures in a situation of war of everyone against everyone, it is not yet a society."[9] On the contrary, war actually makes society: it draws borders, thus separating and bringing together people in terms of "them" and "us."

As the state comes into being, it becomes the main guarantor of community identity, but only in part. States also need war because, in relation with each other, states have not yet emerged from a state of nature. Every state defines itself solely in terms of the enemy. As Glucksmann put it, war is the "mirror stage": it is the chance for States to define their identity in terms of difference and opposition. "War reveals to a people their 'truth,' the secret of their culture."[10] In fact, "the life of a people has no aim other than itself; it can neither discover nor produce any other object that is its ultimate truth; in wishing to grasp itself as a thing, it meets with nothing but an empty void. Reality offers it but one, lone mirror in which it may contemplate itself totally: death. A people can only admire their own originality in another people, their enemy."[11] War offers the only possibility of perceiving social and cultural unity: "War is the true *raison d'être* of a State. Without it, a *people* is not a *people*"[12] — and, we may add, a State is not a State. And, through the State, territorialism gains maximum visibility — to the point that the State can be considered a "territorial corporation."[13] Territory becomes an essential component in the political structure of society. It is the arena in which power can exercise its prerogatives. For this to take shape, however, the enemy is necessary. Without it, the State's power would be only a potential power, bereft of an opportunity to exert itself. Other rival powers' claims define the borders of its legitimacy. Hence, no State can exist as a political and cultural entity without war.

It is by now well accepted that violence and war are fundamental characteristics of politics. As Carl Schmitt put it: "war is not the purpose and goal or even the content of politics, but rather its *premise*."[14] Collectivities define their identity solely by denying other communities what they claim as their own. Identity, however, is present only in the background. It is "the political" that controls the scene. For Schmitt, however, the political coincides with the integrity of the collectivity which always needs the Other. And, Schmitt adds, political concepts "have a polemical sense; they imply concrete conflict; they are linked to a concrete situation, the extreme consequence of which is the

9. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
10. A. Glucksmann, *Le discours de la guerre* (Paris, 1967), p. 84.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
13. J. Dabin, *L'Etat ou la politique, essai de definition* (Paris, 1957), p. 45.
14. C. Schmitt, *Le categorie del 'politico'* (Bologna, 1972), p. 117.

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friend-enemy formation (that manifests itself in war and revolution); these terms become empty abstractions if this situation is lacking."[15]

It is no accident that today ethnicity and nationalism are making a comeback. In terms of the friend-enemy polarization, these sentiments provide an immediate antagonism: they foster an ascriptive sense of belonging based on tradition and territory, i.e., the two categories of space and time that have always defined the identity of groups, societies and States. The need for identity is behind this revival — a need intensified by a modernization that has razed old borders without substituting anything in their place. Unlike in the past, membership in an ethnic group for ethnic pride is no longer a claim limited to minorities or marginal groups. As Glazer and Moynihan have noted, ethnicity today cuts across all social strata. As they point out, the attractiveness of ethnicity as an organizational principle consists in that "Different groups *do* have different norms. In the most natural way the unsuccessful group has the best chance of changing the system if it behaves *as a group*. It is *as a group* that its struggles become not merely negative, but positive also, not merely against the norms of some other group, but in favor of the already established norms of its own. One of the difficulties of social class as an organizing principle surely is that there just is not that much conflict of *norm* between most social classes."[16]

And if this were not enough, ethnic groups tend to heighten their antagonistic capability by adding a further element of conflictuality: they become corporative, viewing themselves and acting as interest groups which confront one another in political exchange. Until very recently, a sense of national belonging seemed doomed to fade as a means for mobilization. Now, however, it seems to have returned as an element defining identity and collective solidarity. But this revival is not retreading old paths. Rather, it expresses a conflictuality typical of post-industrial society. In other words, the new nationalism is no longer a regressive reaction to modernization, but rather appears to be an attempt to control modernization through decentralization and autonomy.

These processes are not linear. On the one hand, ethnic loyalties and nationalism represent attempts to confront strategies of domination — a way of distinguishing oneself from the ruling centers of power. On the other, these new trends are in danger of becoming instrumentalized as localized expression of these very same strategies. Indeed, the freeze in the struggle between the two superpowers, due to the threat of nuclear war, has not prevented a vast number of decentralized conventional wars. Since the end of World War II, there has been a shift of the stymied conflict between the superpowers to a

15. *Ibid.*, p. 113. Today, one of the reasons for the blurring of the concept of class may be related to its having lost a great deal of that antagonism it used to express. Today, social conflict takes other forms. In other words, class no longer seems to constitute identity because of the breakdown of the friend-enemy polarization.

16. N. Glazer, D.P. Moynihan, eds., *Ethnicity, Theory and Experience* (Cambridge, Mass., and London 1981), p. 15.

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local level. All local wars have received more or less direct aid from the two superpowers so as to become wars by proxy through which these superpowers have carried on a struggle that can no longer be waged head-on. In the face of this nuclear stalemate, these proxy wars have allowed both of them to bolster their prestige. At any rate, every war has been an opportunity for reestablishing identity, not only for the conflicting parties, but also for their powerful supporters.

In the nuclear age, the situation changes. Today, war fosters "disidentification." The specter of mutual destruction invalidates the premises that made war a mirror for identity. It is the modern apocalypse. It is the current mold of the end of the world, befalling without any religious prospect for salvation. It is the crisis of "cultural homelands," of those collective identities that can no longer be guaranteed by the rituality of war. The new nature of war threatens to destroy them along with the world. In order for one's identity to flourish, the Other's presence is necessary. With nuclear war, not only one's own nation is threatened, but the Other also appears bound to perish. The very logic of the fight to the death no longer works. The possibility for recognition and self-awareness disappears. There are no more winners and losers. It is war that wins. Nuclear war abolishes the friend-enemy distinction. War becomes the enemy. The two contenders are overwhelmed by the nuclear threat that translates friend-enemy antagonisms into an egalitarian relation of mutual destruction.

Nuclear war changes the rules of the game. The relation with death also changes. With the advent of nuclear war, death comes to permeate people's daily lives: it becomes a threatening presence from which there is no escape. Nuclear war reverses several paradigms of our being-in-the-world: with it, death is now at hand for everyone. It leaves us with no future to give meaning to the present. It stifles the unfolding of history by putting an end to history. At the same time, it erases the past because it no longer fulfills our need for belonging. Nuclear warfare goes against the very logic of war, according to which there is always a winner and a loser. Obliterating the distinction between defeater and defeated, nuclear war nullifies the reasons for war. War ceases to be a relation among groups, societies, and States. Converted from a cultural phenomenon into a natural disaster, it takes on the unpredictability and catastrophic outcome of the latter. And like all natural disasters, it generates terror because it interrupts the course of history, placing itself in opposition to societies and cultures. Yet, it is actually by virtue of this detour, this return to a natural state from a cultural one, that nuclear war is transformed into an antidote against war. For the very first time, that spontaneous consensus that made war a constant in history and social life is broken. Peace becomes an obligatory objective: the only possible route for remaining part of history.

This is a peace that is more an outgrowth of fear and death than a free choice to live. The peace that we seek today is essentially an offspring of nuclear war. Peace as the absence of war, the fleeting truce between one conflict and the

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next: hitherto this has been the meaning of peace. This negative definition expresses the limits of our own reason, reflecting our difficulty in conceiving of peace as a value in and of itself. Peace has always needed war in order to be defined. This is the case even though peace has always been presented as something beneficial, indeed, as a goal, unlike war, which has always been viewed as a means to an end. According to Clausewitz's distinction, the idea of peace should be superior to that of war, by virtue of not being heteronomous like the latter. The autonomy of peace, however entails the idea of separation and isolation in all Western thought. Even Plato saw this. In the *Laws* travelling is vigorously regulated since it might jeopardize peace by allowing a meeting with the Other, whose scandalous presence is seen as a threat to the stability of the State and society. Peace is a solipsistic dream since it can only exist among like kinds and equals. Irreducible otherness is the true enemy of peace. Tocqueville envisaged the possible disappearance of war with the development of democracy solely because all democratic peoples come to resemble one another.[17] Similarity eliminates war and engenders peace. Diversity must be excluded in order for peace to exist.

But with the disappearance of diversity and the encounter with the Other, we also lose a certain reference point, the recognition of our own identity — that precious commodity that is our sense of community. Furthermore, it is impossible to exclude the Other. Like war, peace is a relation that always implies two partners. Hence, the question becomes what kind of relation is based on peace? And is this relation capable of fostering mutual recognition? How is identity gained in a non-antagonistic relation? Hitherto there have been no answers to these questions. And the peace movements themselves have not asked this type of question. Pacifism has yet to get beyond the logic of war and its parlance is couched in terms of fighting and choosing sides. Pacifist thinking is still an armed way of thinking, made up of two irreducible opposites confronting one another. Its logic is still guided by the friend-enemy polarization, the only difference being that now the enemy has become war. This logic talks of peace, but is devoid of a culture of peace. Or, if such a culture exists, it is to be found elsewhere. The realm of politics, of the friend-enemy polarization, must be abandoned in order to shift the discourse to the level of ethics. Only ethics can encompass humanity in its entirety.

It is the category of the human species that must be rediscovered to displace the fragmented history of societies and cultures so that everyone can regain the Other within himself. But how can Feuerbach's perception, which was so inspiring to the young Marx, be translated into concrete reality?[18] There are no answers. There are, however, some signs. They all come from a limited yet far-reaching area, most aptly formulated in the expression of post-materialist

17. A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York, 1963), vol. II, chapter 26, pp. 281ff.

18. As Feuerbach wrote, "man is himself at once I and Thou; he can put himself in the place of another for this reason, that to him his species, his essential nature, and not merely his individuality, is an object of thought." L. Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (New York, 1957), p. 2.

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values. According to Inglehart, a slow, intermittent yet progressive change in values is taking place, hand in hand with the new lifestyles of post-industrial society, where material concerns pale compared to others.[19] A silent revolution is under way. It has been vocalized in new movements, in those "prophets of the present" who have made the opportunity to "make sense" and foster awareness of the moving force of their action.

Among these values, the one which is relevant here is the gradual fading of the sense of national belonging. According to Inglehart, this is one of the many effects of mass education, which has raised the level of understanding of politics of a large number of people. Their political vision no longer coincides with the events and institutions of their own country. They also take into account the increasingly complex interplay between national politics and the political choices of other nations. In this context, the reduced need for a cultural homeland seems a purely intellectualistic fact, an archaic, cosmopolitan dream. Yet, there is more to it: this fading need expresses something of an emotional nature. It has to do with an equally elementary need linked to our very chances for survival: the development of a different kind of territorial consciousness. The ecology movements have pushed us in this direction. If territory means the place where vital resources and community rights exist, which is built on the exploitation and management of these resources, then there are resources that elude community control. Pollution has shown that human groups may depend on a territory that is broader than the area enclosed by their own geographical borders and over which they exercise community rights. Control over the air, the water, the atmosphere, the biosphere, which extend over the territory of every human group to the entire planet, entails a change in community borders; these can no longer realistically coincide with national boundaries.

Another post-materialist value discussed by Inglehart is the growing need for community. The cosmopolitan impulse and the community ideal are mutually exclusive. Inglehart examines them side by side, revealing the contradictory nature of the two current trends, i.e., of the tendency to reject national borders as well as its opposite, the tendency toward reinforcing them, or actually equating the need for community with a gradual shrinking of its geographical or cultural dimensions (nation, ethnic group, etc.). The new fact that has emerged with the ecology movements is the simultaneous presence of these two impulses, their complementarity, by virtue of which surmounting national borders no longer coincides with the rejection of the community. Rather, the idea of community is expanded to include the entire planet. If the space containing vital resources for each group must realistically encompass the entire planet, then only the latter can fulfill the need for community.

It has been said that ecology is our chance today to restore an ethical foundation to modern life, inasmuch as it considers humanity as a whole.[20] This is

19. R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution* (Princeton, 1977).
20. G. Baget-Bozzo, *Il Manifesto*, 1983.

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undoubtedly true. Yet, it is true first and foremost for another reason, i.e., ecology imposes a set of rules, an agreement on some principles, a series of obligations. It is certainly no easy task to cull a set of ethical rules from the decidedly pragmatic focus of the ecological movements. One such rule will suffice here: the necessity to safeguard this common good which is our planet means that each individual's need can no longer be fulfilled at the cost of harming someone else. On the contrary, the need is shaped and its fulfillment made possible by recognizing and simultaneously satisfying the Other's need. This is a pragmatic imperative that translates into an ethical rule and establishes a means for recognition beyond the friend-enemy relation. Ecology has put us on the right path. Its message is one of peace: the truce with nature extends to relations among people. The quality of man's relation with nature has always both mirrored and determined man's relation with his fellow man.

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LUKÁCS, ADORNO AND GERMAN CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY*

by Nicolae Tertulian

Lukács' book *The Young Hegel* can be read in many ways. We can read it exclusively as a history of philosophy and evaluate the soundness of its method. We can ask, for example, whether Lukács is correct in attributing a decisive role in the genesis of the Hegelian dialectic to Hegel's progressive discovery of the contradictions in developing bourgeois society, especially to his discovery of the economic facts which split that society. The novelty of the Lukácsian insistence on the role of Hegel's economic conceptions provoked violent reactions from the very beginning. Alluding to the publication of Lukács' book (whose subtitle is "On the relations between Dialectics and the Economy") Benedetto Croce, in a fit of ill-temper, did not hesitate to denounce what he called the "lucubrations of the well-known Hungaro-Russian G. Lukács."[1] We have, however, no proof that Croce ever read *The Young Hegel*. Having noted the book's pivotal idea, he apparently refused to read it. Objections arose to the energy with which Lukács reversed Dilthey's and Haering's *Lebensphilosophie*-based interpretation of the young Hegel and to the violence of his polemic against these thinkers. In particular, objections arose to the extremely partisan nature of Lukács' claim for an eminently political young Hegel whose will to construct a new religion had been fueled (during the Berne period and under the influence of the French Revolution) by a republican and revolutionary-democratic pathos. A number of commentators judged Lukács' rejection of a "theological period" of the young Hegel to be going too far, especially condemning Lukács' one-sided emphasis on Hegel's opposition to Christianity and his failure to address the young Hegel's passionate interest in the original form of this religion and the person of Jesus. Günther Rohrmoser's book *Subjectivity and Reification* provides one such critique, but Adrien Peperzak's *The Young Hegel and the Moral Vision of the World*, which takes a vehement stand against Lukács' partisan theses, seems more typical of one type of reaction. Paradoxically, the central argument of this book is not very different from the Lukácsian reconstruction of the young Hegel's development. Peperzak accuses Lukács of "reducing religion to politics in Hegel," of remaining as silent "as possible on the young Hegel's religious problematic," of not having mentioned even once in his imposing work the long *Life of Jesus* written by Hegel in Berne. Peperzak concludes drastically: "But Lukács covers all this bad faith and his shameful method with the veil of a blinding erudition which can impress an unalerted reader."[2]

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*Translated from the French by David J. Parent.

1. Benedetto Croce, *Indagini su Hegel e schiarimenti filosofici* (Bari, 1952), p. 72.
2. A. Peperzak, *Le jeune Hegel e la vision morale du monde* (Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague, 1960), p. 26.

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Though one may agree with Peperzak's objections on these specific points, I am absolutely certain that Lukács' "blinding erudition" fills a totally different function from that of trying to give credibility to an untenable thesis. The truth is that Lukács' book overturned the traditional interpretation of Hegel's works and contributed significantly to broadening the sphere of Hegelian research. He accomplished this by bringing out the richness and complexities of Hegel's relations with the economic and social reality of his time. Evaluating scrupulously all the texts that run in this direction, he cast a completely new light on the genesis of the Hegelian dialectic.

By an impressive analytical effort, Lukács tries to prove in the chapter on the young Hegel's Frankfurt period (1797-1800) that Hegel's contacts with the contradictions of bourgeois society at the end of the 18th century heightened the tension he felt toward the "dead objectivity" (the reification) of interhuman relations formed within that society. This sharpened his feeling that contradiction is the driving force of historical development. His conception of the subject-object, consciousness-reality relation, supposedly became much more supple and more dialectical due to his insight into the "ferment" of contradictions proper to the new type of society. Certainly, the type of hermeneutics proposed by Lukács is based on a whole series of connections established between the chain of Hegelian concepts and the socio-historical infrastructure, which the interpreter deciphers in minute detail. Thus, in the contradictions included in the Hegelian writings of the Frankfurt period — contradictions between the "multiplicity" of finite beings and the aspiration to unity, between the "separation" (*Trennung*) and "opposition" (*Entgegensetzung*) of these beings and the unifying force of *love*, between mortification by submission to matter and regeneration always due to the vivifying power of love — Lukács sees a reproduction of the central contradiction *lived* by Hegel at the time: that between the "positivity" (the alienating force) of new bourgeois social relations and the philosopher's irrepressible aspiration for the whole man.

The Young Hegel can, however, also be approached from a point of view other than that of a historian of German classical philosophy interested mainly in the accuracy of the Lukácsian reconstruction of the young Hegel's development. As one follows the complicated meanderings of the philosophical course described by Lukács, his itinerary across the relations between the principal protagonists of the philosophy of the age (Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Jacobi, Schleiermacher), one notices that it is more than a purely historical exposition. The discourse takes on a partisan "tendentiousness" (in the good sense of the term); the author explicitly takes a stand for Fichte against Kant, for Schelling against Fichte, for Hegel against his three great contemporaries, and especially, for Hegel against the "Romantic school." Following Lukács' journey, we witness the maturing of a certain conception of the relations between subjectivity and objectivity, between consciousness and reality, whose culmination we will rediscover in the author's two great works of synthesis: the *Aesthetics* and the *Ontology of Social Being*. Hegel's evocation of

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the major philosophical controversies of the period, marked according to Lukács by decisive victories and defeats, thus acquires for us the interest of an "archaeology of knowledge." We participate there, stage by stage, in the *genesis* of a philosophical viewpoint: that which Lukács, following Marx, will take up again and develop in his final works.

One of its symptoms is Lukács' great interest in the young Hegel's critique of the morality of Kant's categorical imperative. The young Hegel was in rebellion against what he considered to be the parcelling of the human being in Kant's ethics. The young Hegel's passionate protest against the tyranny of the Kantian *ought* (the famous *Sollen*) was directed against the formal universality of the Kantian demands, their sovereign indifference to the contradictory richness of the sensitive being, with his multiple passions, inclinations and feelings. Hegel was pleading for the inalienable rights of the *particular* being versus the despotism of Kantian "pure will," and defending a supple, flexible morality, adapted to the variability of concrete circumstances. One can understand Lukács' lively interest in this line of reasoning, which explicitly claims that at the basis of human morality and activity in general is located *being* (*das Sein*) with the infinite multiplicity of its concrete determinations, and not *what-ought-to-be* (*Sollen*) in the Kantian sense of the term: abstract, coercive and impersonal. Are we not entitled to say that Lukács totally assimilates this critique of Kantian morality by integrating it as a central motif of the mature work that culminates precisely in an *Ontology*, i.e., in a theory of the supremacy of infinite being over finite consciousness? Agreeing with Hegel's critique of Kant's and Fichte's subjective idealism, Lukács evaluates it as a grandiose limitation of the prerogatives of transcendental subjectivity, as a vast operation whose end is the reappropriation of the richness of objective determinations. Hegel, in his Jena writings, in the *Differenzschrift* and in *Glauben und Wissen* (*Faith and Knowledge*), opposed Fichte's thesis of the self-constitution of the world by the sovereign power of subjectivity and the Fichtean program of the reabsorption of the non-ego (the objective world) into the self (*Ich = Ich*). It is precisely this Hegelian will to follow the contours of the real that arouses Lukács' as well as Adorno's enthusiasm. Hegelian subjectivity is at the same time self-constitutive and multi-conditioned: only because it is immersed in the heterogeneity of the real does it both dynamize and constitute itself. "Hegel yields everywhere to the object's own essence; everywhere the object rediscovers its immediacy for him, but it is precisely this subordination to the discipline of the thing that requires the extreme exertion of the concept (*die Anstrengung des Begriffs*). The latter triumphs the moment the subject's intentions are obliterated in the object."[3] Each act of the great "spectacle of ideas" presented by the controversial development of German classical philosophy thus becomes, for Lukács, a step toward the constitution of the true philosophy of our time.

Young Hegel's defense of Jesus' versus Kant's morality, the morality of the "whole man" versus the rigorous formalism of the Kantian "pure will," can

3. T.W. Adorno, *Trois Etudes sur Hegel* (Editions Payot), p. 15.

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also be considered a defense of the inalienable rights of the *particular* against the domination of the formal *universal*. The critique the young Hegel aimed at the dissolution of the richness of concrete determinations in the "acid bath" of the abstract universal (to take up an expression that Sartre would later use), and his demand that the universal follow the movement of the concrete determinations, without detaching itself from them, anticipate what will, by a process of radicalization, become the thesis of the irreducibility of being to knowledge defended by Lukács in his *Ontology*, or the thesis of the nonidentical substratum of every process of conceptualization developed by Adorno in his *Negative Dialectics*.

In analyzing the concept of the "ideal" formulated by Hegel in the new introduction to his Berne manuscript, "The Positivity of the Christian Religion," Lukács discovers an extremely interesting prefiguration of the later conception of the "concrete concept." According to Lukács, "Hegel opposes the ideal to universal concepts such as the concrete; the historical to the abstract and the anti-historical." This statement is followed by a quotation from Hegel: "But an ideal of human nature is something completely different from the universal concepts that bear on human destiny and the relation of man to God. For the ideal admits of particularity and determinacy, and even requires, properly speaking, actions, feelings, religious customs, a profusion, a massive profusion, which in the light of universal concepts, looks merely like ice and stone."[4] Hegel's desire to integrate into what he called at the time "the ideal of human nature" the richness of particular, singular, and even accidental determinations of man is interpreted by Lukács as "the first appearance in him of the idea that the conceptual universalization does not necessarily entail — as formal logic would have it — an ever-increasing impoverishment of the content: on the contrary, true philosophical universalization is all the richer and more concrete (by the quantity of determinations which it exceeds) when it reaches a higher stage of universality."[5]

But Lukács cannot fail to see that this impassioned defense of the rights of the particular in the history of the human race develops, in the young Hegel of the Frankfurt period, within the framework of a eulogy of religion and an explicit critique of the arrogance of the Enlightenment's understanding and reason, guilty of having often treated with disdain this historical variation of human needs. "The universal concepts of human nature are too empty to be able to furnish a criterion to determine the particular and necessarily vaster needs of religiosity," Hegel wrote in the same introduction. Recognizing in texts of this kind the great advances made by the young Hegel toward a historicization of the concept of the world, Lukács at the same time criticizes, here as elsewhere, Hegel's idealism and slidings into religion. It is precisely this perpetual concern of Lukács' to distinguish in the young Hegel advances toward the constitution of the "rational core" of his philosophy of "mystical

4. Nohl, *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften* (1907), p. 142.
5. G. Lukács, *Der junge Hegel* (Luchterhand), p. 293.

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exaltation" (in the Frankfurt period) or of the flights into idealism which provoked Bloch's severe rebukes.

Bloch reproaches Lukács with having one-sidedly overestimated the aspects of Hegel's thought which draw him directly to Marx while minimizing the fecund "confrontation with the religious" in the young Hegel's writings. Bloch's discontent is provoked mainly, and not without reason, by the abuse of adjectives such as "confused, nebulous, mystical, metaphysical," which Lukács uses either to minimize or to excuse the Hegel of "tempest and aspiration." As one could expect from a thinker sensitive to the riches of milenarian Utopian and mystic thought, Bloch's tendency is to give weight to similarities between Hegel and Meister Eckhart or Jakob Böhme, or even between Hegel and Hamann, a philosopher hostile to the Enlightenment and considered to be one of the great precursors of Romanticism. This perspective nourishes Bloch's conviction of the intimate solidarity that exists between the religious tendencies of the young Hegel of the Frankfurt period and the seeds of the great dialectical thought: the young Hegel's "mysticism" would be just the expression of the will to transcend the "hardened determinations of phenomena" and to rediscover their interior life. This intimate solidarity was minimized by Lukács, if not disfigured, by his obstinately pejorative use of the word "mysticism." "Lukács' analysis — incidentally, excellent — of the young Hegel," Bloch writes in *Subject-Object*, "precisely in its serenity and seriousness, draws attention to a Hegel who cannot be dismissed with the broadly understood epithet 'mystic,' . . . . for Hegel's mystical period opened him up to many problems, to terminological, but not just terminological, determinations of his later philosophy. . . . Thus, what is of itself confrontation with the religious cannot be eliminated without coercion, neither from the historical development of Hegelian philosophy, nor from the implications of this philosophy."[6]

Bloch's reproach is justified, but only in part, for Lukács is perfectly aware of the intimate correspondences between dialectical thought and Hegel's religious tendencies during the Frankfurt period. This does not prevent Lukács from constantly criticizing these tendencies with excessive scrupulousness. It is equally true that one can rediscover in *The Young Hegel* attacks on what he considers to be the regressive tendencies in Hegel's thought, attacks which, in certain cases, seem completely out of place.

When, in a fragment of the Frankfurt period, part of the commentary on Kant's *Doctrine of Right*, Hegel discusses Kant's thesis that Church and State must not interfere with each other, he is expressing some ideas on the nature of Church and State which carry him toward the ideal unity between the two.[7] He perceives the State as founded on the principle of property (*Das Prinzip des Eigentums*), which would determine a very imperfect conception of man, anchored in the principle of *possession*; the conception of man as a living whole thus would belong to the Church. An attentive reading of the text shows that

6. E. Bloch, *Sujet-Objet. Eclaircissements sur Hegel* (French translation), p. 48.
7. *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, ed. J. Hoffmeister, 2nd edition, pp. 281-282.

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Hegel aspired to correct the onesidedness of a State founded on the principle of *having* (he denounced the inhumanity and fanaticism which ran rampant under the reign of such a State) by the action of a spiritual power founded on the idea of the whole man. Lukács takes literally the Hegelian program of synthesis between Church and State and castigates it: "Of course, Hegel will never, even later, come to a correct conception of the relation between religion and the State, but never did he go to such an extreme of *reactionary and theocratic utopianism.*"[8] But the humanist pathos that permeated the young Hegel's conception of religion excluded *a priori* the idea of a theocratic and reactionary power; if one reads the fragment according to the spirit and not the letter, one would be tempted, rather, to see in it a critique of the principle of *having* in the name of the principle of *being* (man as a living whole). This critique will later become one of Lukács' central theses in his critique of alienation.

Lukács' *The Young Hegel,* Adorno's *Three Studies of Hegel*, but also his *Negative Dialectics,* and Bloch's *Subject-Object* comprise a grand eulogy of the Hegelian dialectic as a logic of the concrete, of mediation and of becoming, which suppressed both static apriorism and narrow empiricism by abolishing the traditional dichotomies between form and matter, the universal and the particular, the immediate and the mediate, the finite and the infinite. The Hegelian dialectic is the common matrix of thought developed by each of the three philosophers, even though, besides the fundamental affinities in interpretation (due also to the central influence of Marx), important differences can be detected (especially between Lukács and Adorno).

Lukács especially stresses Hegel's "grandiose objectivity," his "heroic struggle" to immerse himself in the "ferment of contradictions," his austere will to imbue his thought with the multiplicity of determinations and contradictions of the real. Sometimes the analysis insists on Hegel's respect for the particular. Since it is irreducible, the thing must not be drowned in the thought of the thing. At one point, Lukács cites a personal note of Hegel's Jena period, published by Rosenkranz: "To study a science, it is necessary not to let oneself be thrown off track by principles. They are general and do not have so much importance. It seems that only what is particular has any importance. Often the principles are even as bad. They are the consciousness of the thing and the thing is often better than the consciousness." Lukács sees in this Hegelian apopthegm the key to the young Hegel's whole manner of philosophizing: "This 'empiricism' . . . is a fundamental trait of the *specific form* of his dialectic."[9]

The exciting thing about the speculative itinerary reconstructed by Lukács is that each episode looks like an ever more advanced stage in a unitary movement of thought which develops irresistibly, often unknown to the consciousness which the protagonists themselves have of it: it is a matter of opening ever deeper gaps in the self-sufficiency of the constitutive power of subjectivity, of

8. *Der junge Hegel, op.cit.,* p. 202. Italics added.
9. *Ibid.,* pp. 325-326.

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reconquering in its entire breadth and depth the dimension of objectivity, of giving back to the fabric of the object its density and its complexity, of proving, finally, that it is only through confrontation with the wealth and objective determinations that subjectivity can arrive at its full development. In a word, it is a matter of the famous shift from subjective to objective idealism.

Kant was unhappy that Fichte's *Theory of Science* gives an important place to the material (the content) of knowledge: "For, a pure theory of science," Kant wrote in his reply to Fichte in 1799, "is neither more nor less than a pure logic whose principles do not go as far as the matter of knowledge, but which, as pure logic, abstracts from the content of knowledge; to want to extract a real object from it by means of a minute analysis is a futile attempt and a thing never yet done; if it is to be a transcendental philosophy, it must first of all make a leap into metaphysics."[10] By including in his *Theory of Science* some problems about the "material of knowledge" despite the Kantian interdiction, Fichte thus opened a way that would lead to the Hegelian methodology: Lukács observes rightly that "it is precisely the inclusion of the content of problems in logic that constituted a very important element in Hegel's dialectical logic."[11] Fichte suppressed the rigid Kantian dualism between consciousness and the unknowable thing-in-itself. By postulating that the world is knowable because of the institutive power of the Self, by dissolving the world of nature into the determinations of the constitutive Self, he opened the way to a more dynamic conception of the subject-object relation than that developed by Kant. Lukács and Adorno both reproach the Kantian theory of knowledge for its relatively static character, the fact that the constitutive categories of experiences are accepted as given and "are not deduced dialectically one in function of the other." The typical problematic of the Kantian critique: "That there are synthetic *a priori* judgments — how are they possible? —" Lukács writes, "shows that Kant understands the categories and their relations as something given."[12] Adorno in turn notes, in the first of his *Three Studies on Hegel*, about Kantian philosophy: "Much as, on the one hand, the categorial forms of the *cogito* necessitate a content which is given and does not proceed from themselves to make truth, i.e., the knowledge of nature, possible, so, on the other hand, the *cogito* itself and the categorial forms are respected by Kant as some sort of givens; in this regard, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, at least, is a phenomenology of subjectivity rather than a speculative system."[13]

In Fichte, by positing and opposing the Self and the Non-Self, there appears for the first time a dialectical conception of subject-object relations, and the categories acquire a *genesis*. But Fichte conceives nature, insofar as it is objective reality, only as a *limit* of consciousness, as a given to which the formative activity of consciousness is applied and which only exists thanks to the immanent laws of the spirit: ". . . in truth, it is found not according to its *own* laws but

10. *Fichte's Leben* II, pp. 160-162; cited by Xavier Leon in *Fichte et son temps*, Vol. II, pp. 121-122.
11. Lukács, *op.cit.*, p. 309.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 392.
13. Adorno, *Trois Etudes sur Hegel, op.cit.*, pp. 22-23.

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according to the *immanent* laws of the intellect."[14] It is only with Schelling that Nature, in the fullness and richness of its determinations, makes its spectacular eruption into German classical philosophy. The fact that Schelling claims the legitimacy of a *Philosophy of Nature* alongside the Fichtean *Theory of Science* marks a decisive advance toward the recognition of an ontological autonomy of nature in regard to consciousness, even if Schelling's nature always remains an emanation of the Spirit: the break with Fichte becomes inevitable. Bloch always celebrated the "Dionysiacal Schelling" and Lukács recognized Schelling's dialectical ideas on nature as his great contribution to philosophy and the most advanced part of his thought.

In the first writings of the Jena period, Hegel developed an extraordinary theoretical work to criticize the "philosophy of reflection," i.e., Kant's, Fichte's, and Jacobi's philosophies. He reproached Kant and Fichte for maintaining a relation of juxtaposition between the empirical multiplicity of finite phenomena and the unifying power of the inifinite concept, for not managing to incorporate phenomenal richness into the conceptual synthesis, for clinging to the finite determinations of the intellect (*Verstand*) and for not ending in a real fusion of appearance and essence, in which their true identity is established by the speculative power of *Reason* (*Vernunft*). The philosophy that he criticized does not, according to him, effectively "digest" phenomena (appearances), does not embrace their concrete contours, their articulations and intimate connections by means of the concrete work of a dynamic Reason: reality retains a trace of dead exteriority, of a not integrally assimilated residuum, the finite was not truly dissolved and absorbed into the infinite whole. The Hegelian will to plunge into the finite determinations of reality by scrupulously respecting their immanent logic, not stopping before them (which would amount to reducing the world to a subjectively arrested pole), but continually going beyond them by alternating between respect for division and opposition and the tendency toward their continuous resolution, shows well the double movement, contradictorily unitary, of the Hegelian dialectic. The extraordinary submission to the immanence of objectivity, which seduced both Lukács and Adorno, is accompanied necessarily by an incessant work of mediation effected by subjectivity. The work does not propose to reabsorb the object linearly into the subject, to arrive at what Adorno calls in the first of his *Three Studies on Hegel* "the univocity of an immediate identity": the work of mediation of subjectivity is destined to resolve the "hardened determinations of the phenomena," to penetrate the deep strata of the real, to discover some articulations and relations that are difficult for the immediate intuition to reach, even if the terminus *ad quem* remains in the Hegelian idealism the reabsorption of substance into the subject, a mythical subject-object identity.

In the chapter devoted to Hegel in his *Ontology of Social Being*, which bears the title "The False and True Ontology of Hegel," Lukács speaks of the fact that this thinker was possessed by "such an intense thirst for authentic reality as

14. *Fichtes Briefe*, II, pp. 292-293. Cited by Lukács, op.cit., p. 319.

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cannot be found in any other thinker since Aristotle." Lukács never showed the least sympathy for the "constructive" character of Schelling's idealism, the brilliant syntheses such as the famous "intellectual intuition," the eulogy of a direct contact with the Absolute beyond the limits and restrictions of the understanding. The opposition between Hegel's and Schelling's "intellectual physiognomy" — between the former's method based on the "patience of the concept," the hard work of the negative, the laborious, often painstaking, mediations, and the latter's method based on divinatory flashes, "bursts of genius" — profoundly reveals Lukács' own intellectual physiognomy. He never loved the spectacular style nor great inspired gestures in philosophy. In his book on Thomas Mann he opposed Schelling's mode of philosophizing, which, according to Hegel's critical remark, "accomlished his philosophical formation in the eyes of the public," with the extremely conscientious and scrupulous method of Thomas Mann, his rigor and exemplary bourgeois reserve, the subtle dialectic between the will to make his work a "mirror of the world" and the expression of a German bourgeois consciousness characterized by moral integrity and an ethic of good craftsmanship. Asking himself whether these two requirements (the work as "mirror of the world" and "consciousness of the German bourgeoisie") are not contradictory, Lukács answers negatively and praises Thomas Mann's firm stand on the immanence of reality, from which, without ever leaving solid ground, he would progressively let his ideal show through. As for Hegel's critique of Schelling, Adorno will subscribe to it with no less energy than Lukács, by denouncing the dogmatism of "intellectual intuition" as a form of contact with the Absolute,[15] while Bloch will adopt a much more comprehensive position *vis-à-vis* Schelling, which will lead him toward significant divergences from Lukács.

The central thesis of *The Young Hegel* holds that the maturing of Hegel's dialectical thought occurred in pace with his turning away from the Jacobin illusions of his early youth and accepting the bourgeois society of his time as a necessary historical reality of which certain aspects, on the plane of diversification or of the "privatization" of social life, assured even this society of a superiority over that of antiquity, which Hegel always admired and glorified. To the fidelity long preserved by Fichte or Hölderlin toward the Jacobin ideal, Lukács opposes Hegel's sober realism and his spirit of accommodation with post-revolutionary bourgeois reality. Lukács' apparently parodic thesis holds that the Jacobin rigor of Fichte's thought would have brought a halt and, finally, an involution to his thought, which was blocked in the presence of the new post-revolutionary reality, whereas Hegel's spirit of conciliation, flexibility, and realism become the source of the extraordinary fecundity of his thought. This would explain why the bourgeois Hegel is the great thinker of the modern age and not the revolutionary democrat Fichte.

A problem arises here concerning the intellectual biography of Lukács himself: does not the manner in which he reconstructs Hegel's political and

15. *Drei Studien zu Hegel* (Suhrkamp), p. 20.

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philosophical itinerary, from the writings inspired by the republican and revolutionary spirit to the "sober realism" detectable since the Jena writings, his particular reading of the Hegelian understanding of post-revolutionary society as an irreversible reality, represent a disguised expression, through the young Hegel's biography, of his own intellectual trajectory, from the Utopian messianism and voluntarism of his youthful writings since *History and Class-Consciousness* to the unqualified advocacy of *realism* in the writings of his mature period?

Goldmann pointed this out, but in questionable terms. In the article on Lukács written for the *Encyclopedia Universalis*, Goldmann recalls Trotsky's characterization of Stalinism as a Bonapartist dictatorship (a concept that would designate the social reality of post-revolutionary dictatorships in general). Goldmann argues, without any tangible evidence, that Lukács would have admitted this characterization of Stalinism as Bonapartism, but in a totally different sense from that which Trotsky gave it. Accordingly, Lukács clung to Stalinism because he had established, even without admitting it on the political level, a parallelism between the Stalinist dictatorship, as the necessary expression of a post-revolutionary situation, and the Napoleonic dictatorship established in France to counter the military pressure of the reactionary outside world and to defend the Revolution's essential conquests. It is by virtue of this logic, if we follow Goldmann's reasoning, that Lukács first consciously put "in parentheses" the violently repressive aspects of Stalinism denounced so vehemently by Trotsky, and accepted it as a form of Bonapartism. It is thus that Goldmann explains Lukács' defense of Goethe's and Hegel's works in his writings of the 1930s. He would have seen them as the only two great German writers who had understood the meaning of the Napoleonic event as an aspect of the French Revolution and had rallied, full of admiration, in support of Napoleon's action. Goldmann's account has made its way into more recent writings: Lukács' eulogy of the resigned wisdom of Goethe's writings in his mature period or of Hegel's "accommodation" to the post-Thermidorean society becomes, in this interpretation, a kind of projection of his own resignation to the post-revolutionary reality of Stalinist Russia. It is the experience of disenchantment in regard to his own youthful illusions that enabled him to understand both Hölderlin's tragedy or the impasse of Fichte's philosophy, and the profound substance of Goethe's and Hegel's works. There is even an important testimony from Cesare Cases, a friend of Lukács', according to which Lukács himself did not deny this account.[16] At any rate, the praise of Hegel's "realism" and especially the way Lukács proves that Hegel's dialectic was forged by immersion "into the ferment of contradictions" of contemporary society, were fed by his own socio-historical experience. Certainly Lukács does not overlook the idealism that is consubstantial with the Hegelian dialectic: his thesis, which once provoked Eric Weil's displeasure (he probably found it too pervaded with Marxist orthodoxy) holds

16. See Cases, "Introduction" to *Lehrstück Lukács*, ed. Jutta Matzner (Suhrkamp, 1974), p. 54.

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that since Hegel's extremely lucid view of the social contradictions could not find any real solution in the immanence and contradictions of the social process, it was projected into the ideal heaven of a mythical subject-object identity.

Adorno's attitude toward Hegel is, broadly speaking, as ambivalent as Lukács': superlative praise of the Hegelian will to plunge by thought into the immanence of things, but at the same time repeated critique of his philosophical idealism, of the final restoration of the primacy of the subject by postulating the identity of subject and object. Adorno stresses that these two contradictory movements are closely connected in Hegel's thought: "If Hegel can think starting from the thing and somehow leaving it passively to its own content, it is only because, within the system, the thing is referred to its identity with the absolute subject. The things themselves speak in a philosophy that strives to prove that it itself is totally at one with things."[17]

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17. Adorno, *op.cit.*, pp. 14-15. Adorno's readers might be surprised by the fact that he never made the least reference in his philosophical writings to Lukács' book on *The Young Hegel* (published in 1948). Neither the *Three Studies on Hegel* (1963) nor *Negative Dialectics* (1966) explicitly refers to it. There is only a brief mention of it in the introduction to his polemical text directed against Lukács: "Forced Reconciliation" (*Erpresste Versöhnung*), published in the second volume of *Notes on Literature*. Here Adorno recalls in passing "a fat book on the young Hegel" in a section on Lukács' published works after 1930, but the way this comment is introduced (see p. 153 of the first edition, 1961) leads one to suspect that Adorno's opinion of the work would not be particularly favorable.

But the surprise is still justified by the fact that Adorno's Hegelian works inevitably take up themes that Lukács dealt with. In analyzing the decisive role of the concept of *work* in the genesis of the Hegelian dialectic, the eminently positive function of Hegel's concept of *Entaüsserung* (alienation), or the untenable character of the thesis of the identical subject-object, Adorno must have been aware of the long development of all these topics in Lukács' book: yet no mention is made of it. Polemical references, which one might expect as a result of their different approaches to the same topics, are likewise missing. Adorno seems to have pretended to ignore the very existence of a book by Lukács which amply treated the same themes as his. The real surprise, however, is that, among Max Horkheimer's papers in the Archives of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, there is a review of Lukács' book written by Adorno. This text, two tightly-typed pages long, was probably written shortly after the first edition of *The Young Hegel* appeared in 1948. The references in Adorno's text are to this edition. The text is entitled "Ad: Economy and Society in the Young Hegel," and one might conjecture that it was meant to inform Horkheimer of the essential content of the work. (The fact that it was signed with Adorno's familiar first name, Teddie, leads one to conclude that it was written exclusively for private use.) Nonetheless, it gives incontrovertible proof of the attention with which Adorno read Lukács' text and of the profit he drew from it, in spite of the distance he seems to place between him and it in his brief conclusion.

Several times in the course of his review Adorno is struck by the extraordinary interest of those Hegelian texts from the Jena period that deal with economic problems and which Lukács was the first to draw attention to. The expression *grossartiges Zital* (terrific quote) occurs twice à propos of Hegelian considerations on the increasingly mechanical character of human work and on the reifying character of money. Thanks to Lukács, Adorno seems to discover a completely unknown side of Hegel. Adorno is also drawn to Lukács' analyses of Hegel's concept of *Entäusserung*, to its double significance. We must note that among his own considerations on the richness of the exteriorization of the subject in the world for the enhancement of the subject, formulated in his various writings or his university courses, Adorno defends a conception identical to Lukács' (both were inspired on this point by Hegel and Goethe). The review concludes with a critique of Lukács' marked tendency to analyze Hegel's work exclusively in a Marxian context. Using an image which was to become familiar in his work, Adorno concludes negatively that Lukacs, "out of fear of the Party Bosses" (*"aus Angst vor dem Bonzen"*), dared not seek the materialist motifs in Hegel's Logic and Metaphysics, but limited himself to finding relations between Hegel's economic

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But Adorno's confrontations with the Hegelian dialectic, which returns as a *leitmotif* throughout his work, has very particular nuances. The *principium movens* of Adorno's reflection is the will to defend, on all levels, the imprescriptible rights of the singular, the particular, the individual, against the invading pressure of supra-personal mechanisms, the dominating power of totalitarian systems, the repressive hegemony of what he calls "bad universality." His strategy is to associate the critique of societies based on the enslavement of the individual by homogenizing structures, whether they be dominated by the principle of exhange or subject to a one-party hegemony, with the critique of systems of thought based on the preeminence of the universal over the particular, the transcendental subject over the empirical subject, the identical over the non-identical. It is as if all thought which affirms the dominating power of the concept over the rebellious material of the non-conceptual (of the empirical), of the identifying thought over the non-identical singular, of the subject over the object (and here all German classical idealism is also the target) would, by its very structure, on the social level, guarantee the domination of supra-personal forces over individuals, the sacrifice of the individual to powers which dispossess him. A thinker in a "time of distress" (it is to Adorno, rather than to Heidegger, that one ought to apply Karl Löwith's formula), Adorno wants to make his philosophical reflection the spokesman for outraged singularity, a reality too long disregarded, according to him, by the systems of traditional thought (including Hegel's), which had been based on the preeminence of the concept, and the whole at the expense of the non-conceptual. A passage in the introduction to *Negative Dialectics* clearly expresses this program: "Given the historical situation, philosophy has its real interest where Hegel, in accord with tradition, expressed his disinterest: in the non-conceptual, the individual and the particular, in what — since Plato — has been eliminated as ephemeral and negligible, and on which Hegel stuck the label of lazy existence. Its theme would be the qualities it reduced, as contingent, to the rank of *negligible quantities*. What hems in the concept is what it does not attain, what its mechanism of abstraction excludes, what is not already a specimen of the concept."[18]

Adorno's reasoning is the brutal retroversion of philosophical theorems into socio-historical realities. There is in him a quasi-perpetual osmosis between a critique of the principles of traditional philosophy and a critique of the different types of societies which mankind has known down to the present: as if these principles had no other function than to justify and transfigure these societies.

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thought, baced on classical political economy and that of Marx and Engels. Abstracting from the excessively reductionistic character of this image of *The Young Hegel* (it does not take into account the rich, strictly philosophical part of the book that analyzes the relations between Hegel and Kant, Fichte, Schelling or Jacobi), one must note that Lukács was on his own to fulfill Adorno's demand and analyze what Adorno called "the materialist motifs in the Hegelian Logic and Metaphysics" in the massive chapters dedicated to Hegel in his great work, *Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins*.

18. Adorno, *Dialectique Negative, op.cit.*, p. 15.

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When he has occasion, as is often the case, to denounce the preeminence of the universal over the particular, he is really attacking precise social universals: he is thinking of the fact that modern society, in the process of the progressive socialization of individual life, has created coercive supra-personal structures (the principle of exchange in economics, the State, or juridical norms, etc.) which, by functioning above and beyond singular spontaneities, impose themselves on the multitude of individuals as an imperative generality and not as a harmonious receptacle for the diversity of their aspirations. The predominance of the One over the many in the philosophical systems of the past would in the last analysis be merely an apologetic transfiguration of this hegemony of a coercive identity (the social generality) over the oppressed non-identical (the individuals in oppressive societies). The universal Adorno inveighs against is the one that fails to flow over into the intimacy of the particular, to truly respect singular determinations in order to establish a harmonious relation with them. The hegemony of such a universal thus necessarily ends in a false reconciliation between the general and the particular, for it perpetuates the fissure between the collectivity and the individual, and the domination of the former over the latter. Adorno's main criticism of Hegel is that, despite contrary tendencies inherent in dialectical thought, his approach privileges the universal over the particular, transfiguring the first into necessarily positive force without taking into account the fact that, in real life, social generality (economic laws in the society regulated by the principle of exchange, the juridical norms of positive law, government regulations, etc.) is often built on the sacrificing of what is specific and irreducibly qualitative in individuals.

Adorno's description becomes particularly convincing when it shows that individuals come to act in the sense imposed by the social constraint (of the *universal*), which is thus aided in imposing itself, while the individuals act not on their own behalf, but against their own consciousness, under the pressure of imperatives of self-preservation. Adorno is convinced that to save the qualitative irreducibility of the individual, it is necessary to submit some of the fundamental theorems of classical philosophy to drastic revision. In his brutal transitions from the socio-historical to the philosophical level, he does not hesitate to claim that the concept's power to master non-conceptual heterogeneous material (the empirical), i.e., the thesis of the sovereignty of the subject over the object, merely prolongs, on the level of thought, domination on the social level, the preeminence of the whole over the part. *Negative Dialectics* wants to show that, to oppose the reabsorption of individuals into a supra-ordinated social reality, to neutralize the illusion that individual differences can flow into a harmonious social whole, to save the singular residuum that is opposed to coerced adaptation, it is necessary to defend the irreducibility of non-conceptual material (of the real in its opacity) against the ravenous power of the concept, the ineliminable difference between the real as it *is* and conceptual activity. Conceptual activity must know its place as just one factor in the process of knowledge. The confrontation with the heterogeneous material

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of the real will never cease; conceptual activity will never succeed in *exhausting* the determinations of its object. To abolish the autarchy of the concept, to awaken the subject from the idealistic illusion of its unlimited sovereignty, to defend vehemently the "primacy of the object," of what there is in it of the non-identical as opposed to the activity of identical reduction inherent in the concept, that is the essence of Adorno's materialist dialectic. One of the most spectacular reversals that he tries to perform on the Hegelian dialectic is to challenge the famous thesis in the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit:* the whole is the true. At the end of the second of his *Three Studies on Hegel*, Adorno reproaches Hegel for having transfigured positively the idea of the whole in the conviction that the particular can be understood, without remainder, in terms of the whole of which it is a part, and forgetting the irreducible and non-identical element in every particular. What he questions is Hegel's optimism concerning the power of strict logic which strives to insert the object completely into the web of conceptual determinations, i.e., which absorbs the object into the subject's predicative activity even to the point of a complete identification of subject and object.

It is difficult to sum up Adorno's attitude with regard to Hegel, since the pages which he devotes to him are characterized by a perpetual balancing act between positive and negative judgments. Adorno cannot hide the fact that almost everything in his own approach has its roots in the Hegelian tradition. He pays homage to Hegel for having broken with the formalist theory of knowledge, for having opened thought to the *content* of the cognitive process (immersion in the object), for having made contradiction and "determinate negation" the law of the development of the real as well as of thought. Adorno knows that Hegel was the source of this movement which "descends" into the immanence of the particular and the singular, that does not fear dirtying itself by contact with the specific, that knows how the one who remains in the sphere of the general is condemned to sterility. It is Hegel who noted in his personal fragments from Jena the proposition that we have evoked in regard to Lukács' analyses: "It seems that only what is particular is important." Adorno's profession of philosophical faith is inscribed in the way opened by Hegel: "Dialectics states that philosophical knowledge is not at home where it has been located and where it prospers too easily, free in some way from the weight and resistance of being, but that it truly begins only where it illuminates what seems opaque, impenetrable, pure individuation. The dialectical proposition: '. . . the real is absolutely an identity of the universal and the particular,' refers to this."[19]

But from the first pages of *Negative Dialectics* the great praises heaped on Hegel for having opened thought in the direction of what is heterogeneous to the synthetic activity of the subject are accompanied by the accusation of having *broken* this deeply fecund orientation of thought by a contrary tendency to reabsorb the real into the Whole.

19. *Trois Etudes sur Hegel, op.cit.*, p. 91.

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One might question the legitimacy of Adorno's view that in the Hegelian proposition "The whole is the true" lies the sanction for the idea of the closed social system, the closed universe in which individuals are enslaved to the principle of domination (of which the modern "administered world" would be the most characteristic expression). At the end of the second study on Hegel, Adorno defends Kant against Hegel, precisely because the former refused to suppress the heterogeneity of the real from thought and to dissolve the contradictions in the synthesis of an all-comprehensive Whole (the Hegelian Absolute). "The trial between Kant and Hegel, in which the striking argument of the latter held sway, has not ended; perhaps because its striking aspect, the predominance of strict logic itself, represents non-truth compared with the antinomies of Kantian thought. While Hegel's critique of Kant sovereignly extended the critical activity of philosophy far beyond the formal domain, by the same stroke it dodged the supreme critical moment, the *critique of the Absolute totality — the point at which the theory culminates.*"[20] Does Adorno's legitimate anguish before a social organization conceived as a repressive whole justify his holding the Hegelian idea of the whole responsible for the "objective universal blindness in which everything that is singular remains imprisoned" — to the point where he launches against Hegel the provocative counter-proposition: "The whole is the un-truth"?

The Hegelian idea of "the whole" does not seem to exclude the *openness* of a whole incessantly enriched through singular determinations (which, of course, does not detract from the legitimacy of critiques of Hegelian absolute idealism and its ambition to construct an all-comprehensive system). But Adorno's case against Hegel is aimed not only against the *closedness* of the Hegelian system, but also against the idea of totality itself. Lukács thus seems to have been right to defend the principle of the whole at the end of his *Conversations with Holz, Abendroth and Köfler*, by rejecting the Adornian counter-proposition, "The whole is the untruth," for this principle of the well-understood whole (as an *open* whole) keeps intact its ontological and epistemological value.

Adorno's critique of the Hegelian thesis "The whole is the truth" is closely associated with his critique of Hegel's well-known assertions concerning the rationality of the real. Adorno vehemently opposes the principle of the "rationality of the real" by extracting from Hegel's theorem of a blameworthy sanctioning of the existent a capitulation to *existing* reality. He, moreover, reproaches Lukács for having "revived" this thesis which he considers to be "one of the most dubious ones" in his *Realism in Our Time*. There Lukács argued for the Hegelian distinction between "real possibility" and "abstract possibility" in order to eulogize a "realistic" literature understood as subordination to the given reality and "to defame all literature that departs from it." For Adorno, the "rationality of the real" entails the danger of according a guarantee to reality as it is given, which neutralizes the possibility of illuminating what is "completely different" (*das ganz Andere*). "Such a philosophy stands on the

20. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

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side of the large battalions. It accepts the verdict of a reality which incessantly buries what could be otherwise."[21] Adorno is aware that the Hegelian thesis of the rationality of the real is linked with an orientation found at the heart of his own philosophy, that of the "resistance" of the real to the hegemonial claims of thought: the law of his thought is found in what is different from it (the *real*) and not in its presumed autarchy. The ambivalence of Adorno's thought, of his attitude toward Hegel is also clear here. He declares solidarity with Hegel to the extent that his thesis on the rationality of the real or that of the preeminence of real possibility over abstract possibility means the necessity of submitting to the constraints of the real, not trusting easily in the illusions and fantasies of subjectivity: what actually occurs in reality has an intrinsic logic, an immanent causality. Adorno sees the submission to reality preached by Hegel as a conservative attitude and he does not hesitate to point out the paradox that precisely this attitude will form the background for Marx and Engels' scientific socialist critique of Utopianism: "It is the most reactionary elements and not the liberal and progressive elements of his philosophy which have prepared the terrain for the later socialist critique of abstract Utopianism, not without later providing, in the very history of socialism, the pretexts for new repressions.[22]

Going to the other extreme, he protests against the rationality of the real insofar as that rationality means a possible agreement between the aspirations of subjectivity (the real actor of history) and the objective course of things, a possible connection between the subject and the object. Adorno again appeals to the reality at work in socio-historical experience to promote the idea that it is not *ratio*, but rather *irratio* that dominates contemporary social life, and thus he uses this empirical argument to contradict the idea of the rationality of the real.

It is not hard to see that the term "rationality" is taken here in a normative sense, that of a harmonious agreement between the tendencies of subjectivity and the objective logic of things. A rational society in this sense would in effect be one in which such an agreement is realized. It can be asked whether Adorno is not playing with the same word, *rationality*, in two different meanings. In one instance, the word signals a reality of *fact*, the existence of a logic or causality intrinsic to events (this seems to be the case for the meaning given by Hegel to the thesis "All that is real is rational"); in the other, the word *rational* is taken in a *normative* sense, that of a seamless harmony between subjectivity and objectivity. A society that is irrational in this second sense, in which the antagonisms between the real needs of the individual and the existing social structure remain glaring and irreducible (that is what Adorno envisages when he says that "the real is not reason") can claim its functioning to be perfectly explicable with the *rational* instruments of a critical theory of society.

What is, then, the meaning of Adorno's criticism of Lukács, when he accuses him of having "revived" Hegel's dubious thesis on the "rationality of

21. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

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the real"? Lukács was submitting to the test of critique the image of reality proposed by certain avant-garde literature: his target was the static character of the negativity of the real in this literature, and the no less static and reductive image of the individuals implied in it. He deplored that the situations evoked are deprived of those socio-historical mediations which alone could dynamize and offer coherence to this image: the representation of the real in the literature condemned by Lukács is necessarily characterized by "absence of meaning," since it lacks "perspective" on the true mainsprings of the socio-historical dynamic and the life of the individuals engaged in it. It is in this context that he cited Hegel's phrase concerning the rationality of the real, which seems to have triggered Adorno's recriminations. Adorno rejected Lukács' proposition because the need for a rational perspective of the world seems to lead to hiding the deeply fissured and torn nature of this world, to dissimulating the till now irreducible antagonism between objective social structures and pressures, and the needs of individuals. Nothing in contemporary social experience would justify a harmonious connection between subject and object. He suspected Lukács of wanting to impose on the world represented by contemporary artists a coherence "from the outside," a rationality external to its intimate logic, which would contradict the intrinsic requirements of artistic creation (but the truth is that Lukács never renounced the idea of the "immanence of meaning" in the work of art, an idea which he formulated in the *Theory of the Novel* and to which Adorno often returns). Adorno's position can only be understood by knowing the socio-historical background of his thought, that of a deeply broken world, criss-crossed with distortions.

What is ultimately most fascinating in Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* is the incessantly formulated appeal that thought be conscious of its non-sovereignty, of the fact that it must always be molded by material that is by definition heterogeneous to it. This is what Adorno calls the "mimetic moment" of knowledge, the affinity with the *object*. What interests him most of all is to impose on thought respect for the nuance, the difference, individuation, requiring it to descend to the most minuscule and infinitesimal detail. His attitude toward Hegel can be characterized as an attempt to save Hegel from himself. Adorno is perfectly aware that Hegel's dialectic is a logic of the concrete that wants to contain the particular and the universal in a harmonious fusion, but he steps back whenever he suspects that Hegel is sacrificing the inalienable rights of the singular to the hegemony of the universal. The Adornian reflections always gravitate around the ineluctable gap between the concept's inherent abstraction and the rich density of the web of phenomena. The program of his *Negative Dialectics* is to fill this gap as much as possible, to abolish the distance between the abstract unity of the concept and the movement of things. "To change this orientation of conceptuality, to turn it toward the non-identical, that is the pivotal point of a negative dialectics."[23] His aim is to vindicate contingency, the ephemeral, and *negligible quantities*. He is constantly rediscovering the Hegelian polemic against the abstract understand-

23. *Dialectique Negative, op.cit.*, p. 18.

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ing (*Verstand*), developed by Hegel in the name of *concrete reason* (*Vernunft*). Significantly, in his constant attacks on logicism, in vindicating the rights of the non-conceptual, Adorno strives arduously not to fall into irrationalism against which he incessantly struggles. For example, he denounces in Bergson, a well-known adversary of the abstract understanding, the no less abstract character of his famous "intuitions."

The energy which Adorno deploys in his *Negative Dialectics* concentrates on liberating the singular traits of phenomena from what he calls the "identity constraint." He is no doubt aware that the universal has an objective and singular existence (his critique of nominalism proves it), but in the dialectics of the particular to the general, of the singular to the universal, the emphasis falls on the singular. Lukács, in his *Social Ontology,* underscores no less energetically the weight of individuals and of their singular decisions in historical evolution, but his focus is on the capacity for an individual decision to be inscribed in the generic destiny of makind, in its potential for human generality, i.e., in the convergence between the singular acts of individuals and the universal law of the human race. The requirements of the Hegelian "rational" and "universal" are thus preserved.

In this regard, it seems interesting to recall here the conclusion of Lukács' autobiographical notes, edited before his death, which can be regarded as his spiritual testament. There, he considers human life to be the theater of a struggle between "(true) curiosity" and "vanity." This latter is rejected as the "main human vice" because it fixes the individual in his pure particularity, but he eulogizes "true" curiosity, i.e., an unlimited openness to the world, an authentic freeing of subjectivity to impregnate itself with what is other, because this is the only way that leads to the fusion of the singular and the universal, to what he calls "man's becoming man."

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LUKÁCS AND HIS TIME*

by Laura Boella

1. The "Rebirth of Marxism"

Lukács' last work, *The Ontology of Social Being*[1] (written between 1963 and 1968, rewritten since and left incomplete) is a monumental and tragic document of an era that seems long past, that of the rebirth of Marxism. De-Stalinization provided Lukács with a fresh dynanism. During those years, he returned to his *Heidelberg Aesthetics*, a large, systematic effort started during his youth.[2] The first of the three volumes projected on Marxist aesthetics, *The Specificity of the Aesthetic*, was completed around 1960 and published in 1963.[3] A project on ethics followed immediately. But in a letter May 10, 1960, to Ernst Fischer, Lukács wrote of a difficult transition to the new work: "I now find myself in the transition phase that follows giving birth. The manuscript of the *Aesthetics* is finished and I should get myself into the atmosphere of the *Ethics*: hardly an easy task, as my nervous system has to be adapted to perceptions and associations different from the ones I was used to in recent years. I'm afraid that a reorientation of this kind will take me at least a few weeks, if not months; until then I won't be able to develop truly fecund thinking. Anyhow, this transition will have to come to an end (*wird erledigt werden*)."[4] Uncertainty runs clearly through a "lived thought" (this was also the title of Lukács' fragmentary autobiography of his last years), ostensibly sure of completing the intellectual work of a philosopher who, past the age of 80, claimed to be getting ready to write "a work of decisive importance."[5]

An ethics requires a broad introduction in order to clarify the fundamental components and the structure of social life. Traditional Marxism cannot provide this — and this is probably why it has such great difficulty whenever it confronts an ethical theme. The "Introduction" eventually took up Lukács' last 10 years, growing into *The Ontology of Social Being*. In the end, the great length of this work kept Lukács from realizing the project on ethics — to be precise, he died before he could get to it. Lukács, "the absolute genius of morality," as his friend Ernst Bloch called him in *The Spirit of Utopia*,[6] had already

*Translated from the Italian by Eleni Mahaira-Odoni.

1. *The Ontology of Social Being* (London, 1978).
2. Posthumously published in two volumes: *Philosophie der Kunst (1912-14), Werke, Band XVI* (Neuwied-Darmstadt, 1974); and *Heidelberger Aesthetik (1916-17), Werke Band XUII* (Neuwied-Darmstadt, 1975).
3. *Die Eigenart des Aesthetischen, Werke Band XI-XII* (Neuwied-Berlin, 1963).
4. Cited in N. Tertulian, "On the Objectivism of the Great *Ontology*, in G. Oldrini, ed., *Lukács* (Milan, 1979), pp. 287 ff.
5. Cf. the 1969 Introduction to *The Road to Marx* (Budapest, 1971), p. 30.
6. Ernst Bloch, *Geist der Utopie* (1918), in *Gesamtausgabe Band XVI* (Frankfurt am Main, 1971), p. 347.

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given up on an ethics project back in 1917-1918. And he did the same thing at the end of his years when, as Agnes Heller notes, this one-time Marxist militant and philosopher became aware that "neither social laws nor violence can create any authentic form of socialism."[7] In 1917-1918, the ethics was made impossible by the plunge into revolutionary activity and into a theory of revolutionary reality that seemed to eclipse altogether the philosophical problematic of subjectivity. In the 1960s, the insuperable obstacle lay in a persistent commitment to a theory of "laws of social movement" into which all individual instances transcending the socio-historical context would have to be channeled. In this sense, the *Ontology* project clearly remains central with respect to Lukács' entire mature thought and represents his explicit philosophical synthesis.

Not surprisingly, once Lukács was past the difficult transition phase and, especially, the trauma of the death of Gertrud, his wife, in 1963, he seemed to acquire a second wind for elaborating the *Ontology*. The philosopher, who, since the 1930s (i.e., since his disavowal of his great *History and Class Consciousness* of 1923), had voluntarily abstained from philosophical activity, choosing instead the guise of literary critic and philosopher of history, returned to philosophy at the end of his life. The ingenuity of this return can only be explained by the spirit of a Marxist rebirth pervading the Eastern bloc in the years of de-Stalinization. The ingenuity of the *Ontology* is the refound language of the "thing-in-itself," the recovered faith in the autonomous capacity of thought to question formulas, to put itself to the test and to redesign a philosophical project par excellence. It is also the Eastern bloc's version of the need to return to Marx, the original source, and to discover the young Marx in connection with the critique of dialectical materialism and the themes of alienation and human essence.[8]

In the last decade, this fascinating and ingenious way of approaching the problem has been challenged. It was first noted by dissident Eastern-bloc intellectuals and, in particular, by Lukács' own students, the philosophers of the Budapest School. For them, the rebirth of Marxism was a failure and an illusion, both politically and philosophically. To believe in the possibility of restoring the true from the falsified Marx meant for them continuing to use the language of power while proposing its internal revision. Predictably, the period of Marxist rebirth coincided in many Eastern countries with reforms from above that were supported by progressive intellectuals (and which quickly failed, in most cases).[9]

For Lukács' students, the rebirth of Marxism meant the rediscovery of the philosophy of praxis that harked back to the young Lukács and to Gramsci. The philosophy of praxis placed special emphasis on man's potential for making his own history, as opposed to determinist visions of society as second

7. Agnes Heller, "Why did Lukács and Sartre Consider their Lives a Failure?" in *L'Unità*, June 28, 1981.
8. Cf. Heller, "On the New Adventures of the Dialectic," *Telos*, 31 (1977), pp. 134-142.
9. Cf. L. Boella, "Eastern European Societies," *Telos*, 41 (1979), pp. 59-76.

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nature, In the early 1960s, the refusal to define the subject of praxis in terms of a class (a refusal that entails a specific critique of *History and Class Consciousness*) together with the use of liberty as a universal-human category produced fresh emphasis on mass needs, individuals and praxis. It also accentuated the potential for a radical critique of Eastern regimes. In effect, the philosophy of praxis was decisively opposed to official Marxism's typical substitutionism — in other words, to societies that were governed by an apparatus that claimed power in the name of the presumed interests of the working class. In short, by recovering its autonomy and specificity of problems and interests, philosophy was assuming the function of a critique of existing political reality while also staking a practical claim on the evolution of socialism.

But between 1968 and 1973, Marxist renovators lost all hope of influencing Eastern bloc socialism. This failure of hope transformed fresh philosophical courage into the need to break clearly with the political of a regime in which the party showed no sign of questioning its own leading role and its view of man and reality as passive, infinitely pliable and maniulable. Amid political disarray and increasing isolation, the positions of the Budapest School came of age. Among the outstanding aspects of this maturation is its taking of a stand with respect to Lukács. In contrast to the usually somewhat abstract view of Western interpreters or to the 1920s *Linkskommunisten* and the erudite, systematic thinkers of the 1950s and 1960s, his students had a concrete and living rapport with themes that went well beyond Lukács' — the theory of needs, the sociology of daily life — in addition to the position they took regarding really existing socialism and Marxism.

The question is, though, what does that socialism mean? What choices does it entail? What breaks and lapses were to lead the mature Lukács to a subjectively rigorous but also politically and ideologically ambiguous standpoint that, in the end, condemned to failure his last desperate attempt to start anew? Starting from these points, Lukács' students question their teacher and friend, a figure symbolizing an epoch of Marxist renewal whose ambiguities, subtle ties to Stalinism and deep dogmatism they have abandoned at the same time that they have shown it to be crucial for both Eastern bloc countries and Marxism in general.

2. Duty and Being

In December 1918, Lukács, in choosing communism, chose an absolute: a relation with the communist movement and thus with the communist parties of the time and also with the Soviet Union and the Third International. It was an existential choice, a Kierkegaardian gesture caused by the anxious search for a community that had dominated his pre-Marxist thought. As Agnes Heller writes, the recantation of *History and Class Consciousness* — the great *caesura* in his work — was induced by the existential choice of an absolute just as much as it was by the anxiety of confronting that same absolute. Therefore, the Lukácsian about-face of the 1930s cannot be simply explained in psychological-existential terms or even in historical-political ones. In the late

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1920s, the complex framework of *History and Class Consciousness* disintegrates, and not just because of the authoritarian involution of the Comintern. Lukács does not abandon the idea of world redemption, although its immediate realization through proletarian action had by then vanished. Hence, his attitude cannot be explained as adaptation, retrenchment, or disillusionment, but rather as a drastic revision of his early philosophy of praxis in relation to the new historical era taking shape with Stalinism and Nazism in the 1930s. However, this was not an attempt to confront with new categories the era of a socialism retrenching to the defense of its own gains (as in Russia), of a rapid expansion of right-wing authoritarian tendencies (as in Germany), of the growing bureaucratization within the International, or, finally, of the ideological crisis of the Western proletariat. Instead, it was the disavowal of a personal radical philosophy, a Hegelian reconciliation with reality. For Lukács, the absolute — i.e., faith in the communist movement — had to be reconciled with the closing of the revolutionary phase. Thus, it could not be a criterion for a historical evaluation of the epoch, perhaps not even for searching for new hidden outlets of the revolutionary spirit along the lines Ernst Bloch followed during the same period. According to Heller, this paradox alone provides a source for understanding the existential itinerary of Lukács' philosophy from the 1930s on: "He had faith in his God and, though fully aware of the ugliness of his world, he kept counterposing to that same existing world an ideal to fit his God."[10] In this sense, until his last years, when his faith in the absolute began to founder, Lukács was at once a Stalinist and an anti-Stalinist.

Therefore, the problem of the mature Lukács was one of ambiguity towrad his faith in the absolute (socialism); it was a case of a paradox turned into reconciliation while the critical distance from the present oscillated too frequently betwden a socially impotent ethico-cultural opposition and the substantive acceptance of the given. Ferenc Feher has identified the crux of this position in the classicism he holds to be a central category in the thought of the mature Lukács. His philosophical position involved "the mobilization of Enlightenment and traditional humanism against a world that opposed itself to reason and humanism, as well as the acceptance of what was called 'socialism,' aimed at transforming the crudeness and at penetrating the barbaric crust in order to refill it gradually with that same humanist and enlightening spirit."[11] Lukács wages his war against Stalinism by constructing a "personal Weimar" — an island of democratic culture inhabited by characters drawn from magnificent books and essays on the classical German culture from the 1930s-1940s literature.[12]

10. See Heller's essay, "The Philosophy of the Later Lukács," in *Lukács e il suo tempo,* forthcoming.

11. See Feher, "Lukács in Weimar," *Telos* 39 (Spring 1979).

12. In effect, in Lukács' work, the figures from Hölderlin, Kleist, Forster and even the young Hegel are the protagonists of self-styled didactic experiences: they lose or they win and, accordingly, the existential choice of individuals becomes more or less resolute in its radicalism or its relative willingness to reject compromise — in other words, in its capacity to adapt to an increasingly prosaic bourgeois life, which results from a revolution stopped in mid-course.

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Since the 1910s, Lukács' classicism had shown a strong preference for art endowed with form, shape and proportion, capable of expressing essence rather than disparate surface fragments. Already at the time of *Soul and Form* this preference had set him apart from the avant-garde and characterized his passion for the neo-classical dramas of Paul Ernst.[13] Through the theory of realism and the thematization of the rationalism-irrationalism antithesis, this strong classicist background became linked to the ideal of a non-authoritarian, pluralistic "ethical democracy" and to the belief in the superiority of reason as a value and goal to oppose to existing reality.

At this point, Lukács' rigorous renunciation of philosophy, of the postulation of an ought and an ideal against actual reality, shows itself to be tied to an objectivist and rationalistic philosophy whose categories grow progressively more rigid. Hence, *objectivism and the fundamental denial of the possibility of ethics* characterized Lukács' mature thought, by this time, Europe was clearly divided into Nazi and Stalinist camps and no *Weltanschauung* could be called innocent any longer.[14] Instead, there was evil, barbarity, un-reason, the "other" and the enemy. Objectivity ("Being" in the 1960s) became the great metaphor for the realization of socialism. The only truth was what already existed, what had been realized in the society that proclaimed itself socialist.

As Feher stresses, the theme of ethical democracy that Lukács developed in the 1930s and 1940s is interesting in the way it focuses on the problem of the democratic overcoming of formal democracy. Lukács anticipates a civil society that is not reducible to capitalism; one that, instead, existed before capitalism and can be projected as the ideal for an authentic democracy where the (transformed) sphere of institutions is tied to that of collective personal relations that are founded on a pluralistic ethics and on communication among equals.

As mentioned, in his magnificent 1930s and 1940s essays, Lukács sketches only the fragments of an ethics. The latter stands in total opposition to his philosophical neo-Hegelianism, the "hunger for objectivity"[15] that led him to the drastic refutation of all dualisms, all discrepancy between reality and ideals and/or gaps in existing reality, thus forcing him to deduce rational principles from something actually existing and given.

The confusion of Duty and Being represents the most profound Stalinist trace in Lukács' thought, one that was later evident in the *Ontology of Social Being*. In it lie the roots of his "classicism," starting with a rationalistic epistemology based on the idea that man, a rational being, is capable of reaching objective knowledge about himself and his world. At a time when Bloch was speaking of appearances crumbling into fragments isolated from the con-

13. Lukács' early "neo-classicism" was critically treated as early as 1918 by Ernst Bloch in *The Spirit of Utopia, op.cit.*

14. G. Lukács, *The Destruction of Reason* (London, 1974), p. 5.

15. Already in his essay "Moses Hess and the Problem of an Idealist Dialectic" (English translation in *Telos* 10 [Winter 1971]), Lukács had made an undeclared revaluation of Hegel's "grandiose realism" and his "rejection of all utopias." The same view on Hegel, this time in comparison to Fichte, the objectivist philosopher, reappears in Chapter I of the *Ontology*.

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test[16] and, like Benjamin, regarded the void as the central category of the present, whose only residues are ruins and mere traces, Lukács was fighting his own battle: his belief in the supremacy of reason was founded on the idea that reality is compact and unitary and that, starting from existence and appearances, a linear, continuous road can still lead to essence by recomposing a unified, homogeneous totality free of breaks and interruptions. Hence, Lukács' classicism is supplemented by a linear and continuous history of philosophy in which all value that is not progressive or does not conform with the "correct" existing model is doomed to decadence and stripped of any historical significance. Within the "correct" philosophy of history, Marxism is a dogmatic value, the assertion of a holistic and essentialist vision of reality with a view of man as Socratically manipulable and educable — once he is freed from ignorance and false consciousness.

3. Beyond Lukács' Time

With Stalin's death, a new social ferment spread over East and West. Both "partisan" isolation and the political basis of the rationalism-irrationalism alternative grew less important. As indicated above, Lukács returned to grand philosophy, the kind that he had undertaken *before* the reconciliation, especially in the aesthetics of his pre-Marxist days. Yet, his objectivism remained: existence (which in the case of aesthetics means the work of art) is an ultimate element, a given that cannot be the object of questioning. Now, though, instead of the presumed socialist society of his earlier period, it is art and the aesthetic sphere that represent the already realized unity between the individual and the species.

According to Heller and Feher, during the years of the Marxist rebirth, Lukács' confusion of Duty and Being became more apparent. Socialism, as ethical democracy, was no longer the ideal type of Stalinism; it now had become a task with respect to which the Marxian promise of a realm of liberty was no longer incarnate in existing socialism, but rather one that acquired again the features of a utopian hope. These were the aspects that furnished Lukács' "fresh spirit" in the 1960s with vigor and eagerness for renewal, reconstruction and the return to the "true" Marx, aspects that also represented the hard-to-abandon legacy of a Marxist rebirth. *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* was also a great work in the sense that, following basic strains from the work of his youth, Lukács' rationalism was emphatically corrected by his stress on theworld of daily life.[17] Nevertheless, although Lukács managed again to express himself in aesthetic-pedagogical forms and to recreate through the best passages in the later aesthetics the pathos of his *idée fixe* — individual self-creation — his final project in the *Ontology* clearly illustrates the extent to which he remained a prisoner of his original premises.

16. Cf. Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit,* in *Gesamtausgabe, Band 4* (Frankfurt am Main, 1962), pp. 221, 225-228 and passim. See also Lukács' and Bloch's polemics over expressionism.

17. Cf. Lukács, *Aesthetik I, op.cit.,* pp. 13-252, for an analysis of everyday thought. For a sympathetic discussion of Lukács' aesthetics, see N. Tertulian, *Georges Lukács. Étapes de sa pensée esthétique* (Paris, 1980).

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The body of criticism that his students address to the *Ontology*[18] provides a lucid account of the distance they took from his philosophy of praxis during the 1960s. Substantial objections revolve on the objectivism and naturalism of the theory of labor, and especially on his assignment to labor of the role of a primary category of social praxis. The Budapest School's insistence on the theme of objectivation attempts to ground much broader rights (far beyond the individualistic and objectivistic sphere of domination in man-nature relations) together with symbolic representation, the creation of values and the communicative relation of subject and object. This is the road that was later to lead Heller to substitute for the ontological-social foundation of values a theory of communication based on consensus, thus developing a rather Habermasian critique of Lukács.[19] Similarly, György Markus followed with his critique of the "paradigm of production,"[20] Above all, though, the Budapest School's verdict on Lukács' *Ontology* insists on the backwardness of his categorical apparatus and on the incoherent and contradictory nature of certain thematizations. The fiasco of Lukács' last work is considered apart from the basic structure of his thought, particularly from the stronger aspects of his *Aesthetics* and his later political positions, i.e., his harsh criticism of Russia's invasion of Czechoslovakia.[21] The theme of ethics, the living nucleus of Lukács' entire thought, and the longing for a community where whole men, their faculties fully developed, could display the "conduct of moral life" — this theme draws its profoundest legitimacy from Lukács' earliest writings and his express hatred of capitalism. However, this same Lukácsian ethical conception of socialism — despite its decisive overcoming of his historical-philosophical limitations — remains much too vast a metaphor given the political-philosophical content of his work. It is no accident that the ethical emphasis mostly characterizes Lukács' pre-Marxist phase — a phase of vague expectations of renewal — and the Stalinist phase, i.e., two periods when Lukács was especially influenced by what he saw as the substantial opacity of the real. Moreover, the ethical project of socialism always comes down to the impossibility of an ethics and to fundamentally unresolved antinomies.

Therefore, the *Ontology* has to be questioned insofar as it illuminates the thought structures that tend to marginalize, treat as heterogeneous and as "non-being" whatever does not validate an objectivity raised to the status of a universal. Dreams, desires, projects, everything marginal, hidden and unseen — in short, all individual-sensible aspects of subjectivity and objectivity — have no meaning for Lukács unless transformed into actual, realized objectivity through the historico-philosophical march toward the fulfillment of the

18. See Feher, Heller, Vajda and Markus, "Annotations on the *Ontology*," in *Lukács e il suo tempo*, *op. cit.*

19. See, for example, Heller, *A Radical Philosophy* (London, 1984).

20. Cf. G. Markus, "Die Welt menschlicher Objekte. Zum Problem der Konstitution im Marxismus," in *Theorien des historischen Materialismus*, S. Jaeggi and A. Honreth, eds. (Frankfurt, 1981), pp. 12-136.

21. Cf. Lukács, "The Twin Crisis," *New Left Review*, 60 (1970), pp. 36-47; "Entretien avec Lukács," in Y. Bourdet, *Figures de Lukács* (Paris, 1971), pp. 175-207.

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species. This approach to the *Ontology* has been taken largely by younger Hungarian dissident intellectuals who have matured politically and philosophically since the 1968 Kadarian compromise era. For these intellectuals, Lukács' choice of the socialist absolute bears the features of an epoch when faith in human emancipation had to rely on science and socialism had to be a fact, not just a moral option.[22]

In his informative analysis of the *Ontology*,[23] Gaspar M. Tamás considers the "institutional-statist-reformist-enlightenment" position of the later Lukács, along with his view that liberalization and democratization were perfectly compatible with the structure of the *Ontology*: Being can also be pluralistic, capable of incorporating anyone wishing to participate in it or draw from it his own existence. What really counts is neither the development nor the autonomous initiative of the subject, its potential or its evolution: the essential fact is its coming into being at the moment it accepts the rules of the game and "learns" to be.

Behind these images it is not difficult to see the subtle anxiety and discomfort of individual existence during the Kadar years, a system whose stability came from its capacity to balance diverse social forces and interests by playing them against each other under a semblance of autonomy; a system of incomplete security where material advantages and power contractually won by individuals were never juridically protected and hence, could be arbitrarily revoked at any time; finally, a system of "loyal liberty" where the individual's margin of autonomy was directly proportional to his renunciation of the creativity and self-determination that would lead him to question the mechanisms of power and/or to become aware of the hierarchy in which destinies were programmed by others.

In Hungary, pluralism and guarantees took precisely this insidious form, robbing individual autonomy and initiative of all purpose. While there is some degree of free criticism, it is neutralized by having to be written "between the lines," until it, too, becomes vague and vapid, the result of preventative self-censure and the circular confirmation of a harmonious, self-preserving system. For young dissident Hungarian intellectuals, the "liberalization" that the later Lukács prized as the fruit of struggle is the outcome of clear political calculation, if not an outright lie imposed from above.

What sets apart the sensibilities of Lukács' younger philosophical heirs from his own directions is part of a history that he never lived through. This history also involves the West, for it marks a radical transformation in the theoretical and political approach to realities in Eastern socialist countries — an approach defined by the crisis of Marxism and especially by the rejection of

22. The truth is that this was not the only alternative at the time. To give just one example, for Bloch, who lived through the Russian Revolution while still a close friend of Lukács, reasons for choosing socialism did not have to derive from facts, but rather from a "utopian" reality constituted by the dimensions of dreams, imagination, and what is still to appear. This is why Lukács' choice of an absolute signifies the seeds of circularity between Duty and Being — a circularity that reaches its theoretical expression in the *Ontology*.

23. Cf. G.M. Tamás, "A Metacritical Letter on Lukács' *Ontology*," in *Lukács e il suo tempo, op.cit.*

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its economistic and sociologistic reductionism. Nevertheless, to question the objectivist elements in Lukács' socialist choice does not really mean a clean break between two epochs or two modes of choosing and living under socialism. In effect, the Budapest School has in many different and diverse ways tried to stay loyal to the philosophy of praxis it identified with in the 1960s; but it has also changed some of its basic premises according to new historical givens and to its more mature assessment of really existing socialist societies. On the one hand, it takes a clear stand against the totalizing claims of Marxism that lead to an idea of a classless society as a homogeneous one, free of conflict and opposing interests. But at the same time, it pays new attention to the national problem (which in Hungary and other Eastern countries is closely linked to that of ethnic minorities), the religious question, and the question posed by the lack of a historical memory among younger generations. The ensuing democratic project is articulated through the intensifying presence of a strong *Öffentlichkeit* independent of power, as manifested, for example, in the Polish experience.

In this context, the failure of the mature Lukács to reformulate the problem of subjectivity and praxis did not throw into crisis the need to confront such problems. It did, however, lead to the idea of progress being discredited along with the idea of a self-oriented philosophy of praxis. Moreover, it has thrown wide open, once again, the essential and enduring metaphysical problems of man. After Lukács, the road of philosophy has regained an absoluteness and a radicalism of a kind that seems to point more in the direction of Kierkegaard's "either-or" than Hegel's mediations.

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REVERSIBILITY[1]

by Claude Lefort

Tocqueville's judgment of the role of 18th century men of letters in the preparation of the Revolution is well known. Under their influence, "each public passion disguised itself . . . in philosophy; political life was violently forced back into the literature."[2] Less attention is paid to Tocqueville's reflections on the rise of new theoreticians — so-called "economists or physiocrats." Tocqueville himself admits that they were not as influential as the philosophes, but he thinks that it is in their writings "that one can best study the true nature" of the Revolution. Further: "One recognizes already in their books this revolutionary, democratic temperament we know so well. Not only do they hate particular privileges, diversity itself is odiuos to them; they would worship equality to the point of servitude. Anything that obstructs them in their designs is to be crushed. They have little respect for contracts and no regard for private rights — or rather, private rights, properly speaking, no longer exist in their eyes; they see only public utility."[3] They do not want to enflame the people or destroy the monarchy. On the contrary, they love authority and order. Tocqueville describes them as "men of pleasant and quiet manners, honest folk, honorable magistrates and able administrators." What does their concern for public usefulness conceal? A complete indifference to political liberties, linked to a strong attachment to economic liberties: "They are much in favor of the free exchange of commodities, of laissez-faire or laissez-passer in commerce and industry; but as for political liberties, properly speaking, they do not dream of them at all and when these liberties happen to occur in their imagination, they shove them aside."[4]

It is not necessary to follow Tocqueville's argument to point out the relation between the conceptions of these honest folk and "the destructive theories that today go by the name of socialism."[5] It is enough to recall that for Tocqueville, political liberalism differs from economic liberalism, which he recognizes as a possible ally of despotism. If he judges free institutions and respect for individual rights to be indivisible, it is a consequence of the critique of omnipotent power. In this regard, Tocqueville's view is similar to that of Benjamin Constant, Mme de Staël and a small number of contemporary French writers. What distinguishes him is his understanding of the dynamic of the modern state and the new character of despotism. Whereas Constant

1. Originally published as "Réversibilité," *Passé Présent*, 1 (1982). English translation by Martha Calhoun. The citations are taken from Tocqueville, *Oeuvres Complètes,* ed. J.P. Mayer (Paris: Gallimard). The abbreviation A, for *l'Ancien Régime et la Révolution* and D, for *De la démocratie en Amérique* are followed by the volume and page number.
2. A, I, p. 193.
3. *Ibid.,* p. 210.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.,* p. 213.

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stops at the speculative critique of absolute sovereignty of the people and sees only error and repression — a return to the past — in a model that would obliterate individual interests by the common interest, Tocqueville detects the traits "of the revolutionary and democratic temperament we know so well." Not only does he argue that the economists "still not finding anything around them that seems consistent with their ideal . . . will go to the depths of Asia to search for it," but he also suggests a power satisfied not just with subjugating an entire citizenry, but seeking to transform it, to the point of actually producing it. "According to the economists, the State must not only command the Nation, but also fashion it in a certain way. It is up to the State to shape the mind of its citizens according to a certain predetermined model. Its job is to inculcate certain ideas in the citizens' minds and to inject in their hearts certain feelings it deems necessary. There are neither limits to its rights nor restrictions on what it can do; it does not merely reform men, it transforms them; and it may become its exclusive task to make them into something else."[6] This is consistent with the last part of *De la Démocratie in Amérique,* although the two images of a guardian State and a State engaged in creating men and a society according to a preconceived model do not exactly overlap.

The economists' project gradually unfolds: the project of absolute power combines with that of knowledge and production, both in society and in the individual. But Tocqueville's intuition of the method in progress goes further: "This immense social power that the economists imagine is not only greater than any they can see around them, it differs from these powers in its very origin and character. It does not issue directly from God; it is not attached to tradition; it is impersonal; it is no longer called King but State; it is not the heritage of one family, but the product and representative of all and must make the rights of each bend to the will of all."[7] Here, Tocqueville is dealing with the irruption of an unprecendented type of domination, to which "the old words despotism and tyranny no longer apply."[8] The ability to transform men, which became attached to power, turns out to be paradoxically linked to its origin in the very bosom of society. Thus, it deserves the name social power. Detached from the person of the prince, emancipated from the *instance transcendante* that made him the guarantor of order and of the permanence of the body politic, and extracted from the nutritive quality that makes it quasi-natural, this power appears as the power society exercises upon itself. The State's power becomes limitless from the moment it recognizes nothing extenal to itself. It is a product of society and, simultaneously, it produces society; it does not know the limits of existence since it appears as the agent of all.

Under the cloak of impersonality, an unprecendented split obtains between this "all," located in the organ of power, and the individual — each individual, who, defined as equal to every other, loses his own identity. This is the emerging picture: "A people composed of individuals almost alike and entirely

6. *Ibid.,* p. 212.
7. *Ibid.,* p. 216.
8. D, II, p. 324.

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equal, this confused mass is recognized as the only legitimate sovereign, but carefully deprived of all the faculties that could allow it to direct and supervise its government. Above it a sole authorized agent is charged to do everything in its name without consulting it."[9]

Who is Tocqueville addressing when he warns "that this regulated, gentle and peaceful servitude that I have just described could unite with some of the exterior forms of liberty more easily than we can imagine and it would not be impossible for it to establish itself in the very shadow of the will of the people"?[10] Writers undoubtedly always envision an encounter with an indeterminate reader, but today we are in a better position to understand Tocqueville than were his contemporaries. His picture seemed exaggerated during his lifetime. It is no longer, if the signs of the extension of social power and equality are compared with what our own society offers. Still, all writers, consciously or not, pose privileged interlocutors and adversaries. Tocqueville is addressing men who consider themselves liberal, and, like himself, part of an enlightened elite — men who take for granted the transformation in ownership brought about by the French Revolution and the Rights of Man, but who remain haunted by the danger of the development of political liberties and individual freedoms and are driven by the fear of the decomposition of the social body. They expect protection of public order from the reinforcement of power without forseeing the rise of despotism. Time and again these concerns appear in Tocqueville's writings: "Dare I say it amid the ruins that surround me? What I dread most for the generations to come is not revolution."[11] Or again: "I am convinced . . . that anarchy is not the worst thing the democratic centuries must fear, but the least."[12] And: "The taste for public peace and quiet becomes (at the end of a revolution) a blind passion and citizens are liable to become infatuated with a very disorderly love of order."[13]

Tocqueville, of course, bore no sympathy for revolutions. He detested the revolutionary's very breed. In 1848 he was to share the feelings of his class and, at the origin of the proletarian insurrection, would see only a "mixture of covetous desires and false theories."[14] In addition, his praise for freedom of the press, civil and political association, and universal suffrage in America is always accompanied by prudent reservations. Thus, his ability to overcome the limits of his prejudices is all the more remarkable. He recognizes the main virtue of democracy in its exuberance rather than in the way democracy might facilitate the selection of the most competent or increase the effectiveness of government in the conduct of public affairs. If people often manage their affairs badly, he does not see this as ground for condemnation, since agitation in the political sphere seems to permeate all of society, encouraging initiative,

9. A, I, p. 213.
10. D, II, p. 325.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 269.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 295.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
14. *Souvenirs*, p. 151.

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the circulation of ideas and the broadening of individual curiosity: "Democracy does not give people the most able government but it does what the most able government is powerless to do: it spreads throughout society a restless activity, an abundant strength that never existed without demoracy and which in the right circumstances can give rise to marvels."[15]

Of course, he constantly contrasts democracy "abandoned to its natural instincts," such as in Europe, to the "quiet and natural development exhibited in America." But if this comparison does not win over his readers — "timid spirits" frightened of reforms that risk falling into anarchy — they might yet be persuaded by the logic that leads him to the formula that best summarizes his thought: "It is in the enjoyment of a perilous liberty that the Americans learn the art of diminishing the perils of that liberty." The nature of the democratic adventure has never been better expressed.

Tocqueville challenges the hypothesis that this adventure has been mastered by means of a power that is strong by virtue of it representing the will of all and which subordinates individual rights to its idea of the common good and the precise stamp it wants to imprint on society. But whatever his concessions may be to the fashionable theory of "enlightened self interests," he bases his judgment on the principle of a natural self-regulation of interests. The fiction of a harmony of individual passions has no place in his thought. Accordingly, in the course of history, under the growing equality of conditions, individuals *discover themselves* to be both independent of and similar to others. He also suggests that citizens *discover themselves* to be equally responsible for the exercise of public authority.

This discovery may not be interpreted within the confines of a historicist view. It does not appear as a contingent event linked to one method of social organization among others equally legitimate: "According to the modern, democratic and, I would dare to say, *just* notion of liberty, each man — presumed to have received from nature the necessary lights to guide him — is born with an equal and imprescriptable right to live independent of his fellows in all that concerns himself alone, and to manage his own destiny as he wishes."[16] Individual liberty is an idea that is both historically specific and just. It is irrelevant to argue that even before the advent of democracy some men were gifted with a sense of their independence; no one is more conscious than Tocqueville of the strength of this sentiment in aristocratic society and of the extraordinary effects it can produce. His point is that the strength of this idea decreases in a society where independence is no longer the province of a few, but is recognized by society. Once individual independence becomes a right and ceases to be a privilege exercised by some at the price of the subjugation of others, it becomes unconditional and reveals its vocation. And there is nothing in this recognition that supports the illusion that individuals are prior to society. Rather, in a democracy, they emerge from the very heart of society, not only as fellow creatures, but as ones who are defined by society and can

15. D, I, p. 255.
16. A, I, p. 62. Emphasis added.

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declare themselves to be so.

Tocqueville further clarifies this point in the same passage: "The moment absolute and arbitrary power is no more than a material fact, a fleeting accident . . . obedience has lost its morality." That is to say, once political liberty is attained, it cannot come up with a system of institutions designed to protect individual liberty. Both political and individual liberty have the same origin — the emancipation from any single authority which assumed power to decide for its own ends matters that affected all. Political liberty for its part becomes unconditional; it is the very essence of the political system. Although we say that in a democracy men discover themselves as individuals and as citizens, we must still understand that no matter how important the institutions are that uphold liberty, there is nothing that necessarily embodies this liberty. Consequently, there is nothing to prevent these apparent forms of liberty from easily being accommodated to a new form of servitude.[17]

Tocqueville's new political science, invoked at the beginning of *De la démocratie*, turns out to be quite unusual. It does not deal solely with the functioning of institutions and has even less to do with the pseudo-science of a body politic whose movements are rigorously regulated and in which each individual is assigned his proper place in order to fulfill the most useful function in the service of all. Tocqueville's political science is more philosophy than science. Exposing the illusions of a theory of organization, it seeks to teach the danger of liberty — not so that it may be brushed aside, but to have the risk accepted and to seek in that danger the means of avoiding other risks. Tocqueville's entire analysis of freedom of the press, of civil associations, of political parties and of universal suffrage is determined by this primary concern.

If individual and political liberty cannot exist apart from each other in Tocqueville, it is not only because they support each other, but also because liberty is not localizable: it is not an attribute of human existence, but a condition of it.

One need only compare Tocqueville's conception with Constant's to appreciate its originality and audacity. Tocqueville clearly shares Constant's hatred for arbitrariness and his idea of liberty is equally free of economic liberalism. In addition, Constant was the first to denounce the fiction of people's absolute sovereignty expressed in the right to constrain the individual in the name of all, and to distinguish the difference between the spirit of the ancients and the spirit of the moderns: he showed that in the ancient city-states, so admired by the 18th-century revolutionaries, participation in public affairs was paid for with a renunciation of individual rights, whereas the enjoyment of these individual rights is irrepressible for the moderns, even though it makes the exercise of direct democracy impossible and undesirable. Constant does not merely affirm that "a part of human existence of necessity remains individual and independent and . . . is, by right, outside the competence of society";[18] he does not merely advocate the observance of forms and

17. D, II, p. 325.
18. *Principes Politiques*, p. 217.

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oppose the fixity of contracts to the reign of arbitrariness. His argument makes the individual the condition and the object of the political order. Having enumerated the modern civil institutions that "are the wide road that today encircles individual liberty," he emphasizes that "this individual liberty is, in effect, the goal of all human association."[19] He identifies contracts with political institutions themselves[20] and defines political forms as "the only relations between men."[21] He sees in the violation of individual liberty the annihilation of all the guarantees that are "the first condition and the unique aim of the union of men under the rule of law."[22] Similarly, he does not consider it sufficient to establish that individual independence is "foremost of the modern needs" and that "as a consequence its sacrifice must never be demanded in order to establish political liberty."[23] Political liberty is no more than a guarantee and the need to preserve it must not obliterate the fact that "the more time we are granted by the exercise of political rights for our private interests, the more our liberty will be precious to us."[24] For Constant, the real reason for participating in political power is the danger that the guardian of authority will take advantage of the electors' indifference and arrange the guarantees of political liberty to suit themselves, i.e., the danger that individuals will lose their private pleasures.[25]

At the end of his famous discourse on "the comparative liberty of the ancients and the moderns," however, Constant suddenly changes his tune. He brushes aside happiness as the unique goal of the human race, and makes liberty "the most powreful and energetic method of perfection that heaven has given us." His vision of the modern democracy is quite different from Tocqueville's. Tocqueville does not challenge the established fact that "in modern times . . . the individual, independent in private life, only appears to be autonomous, even in the freest of states,"[26] nor does he object to the idea that "the personal influence of the individual is an imperceptible element in the social will which imprints its direction on the government."[27] But this only deals with one aspect of the dynamic of democracy. It does not exclude consideration of the vitality of a society that favors initiative in all fields. And this dynamic, which Constant sees as an irreversible movement toward private pleasures, for Tocqueville reveals the emptiness that results from the withdrawal of each individual into his own sphere — an emptiness that will engulf social power. Tocqueville's problematic of the individual changes entirely in light of his new concept of politics. Constant uses the term to designate actions and relations governed by common interest. Political power is circumscribed within society by the specific functions it serves: maintaining public order by

19. *Ibid.*, p. 408.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 410.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 411.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 412.
23. *Ibid.*, p.506.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 509, 512.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 513.
26. *Ibid,* 496.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 448.

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protecting the security of individuals; asking for the strength and subsidies needed for the smooth running of all types of transactions between citizens; assuring defense against possible foreign aggression. Traditionally, three areas define the field of intervention: justice, finance, and defense. The public domain is split from the private, common aims from individual ones, and at the same time power is situated outside individuals, regardless of the influence they might exert on government action by voting or expressing their opinions.

While Tocqueville doesn't change this definition of politics, in his analysis of American democracy, he does distinguish between the social state and its political consequences, between civil associations and political associations, between administrative power and political power, ideas, feelings and habits, and between despotism and political liberty. In spite of these distinctions, democracy appears as a *form of society* whose uniqueness is clarified particularly in contraposition to aristocratic society. Whatever Tocqueville's efforts to hold equality of condition as that which generates all other equalities, he makes it clear that in a democracy equality acquires a meaning different than in the *Ancien Régime.* In distinguishing administrative centralization from governmental action, he awards the former a symbolic dimension. He does not wish us to recognize a type of activity different from politics, rather, he gives political meaning to what had hitherto escaped analysis. He does not identify civil associations with political associations; still less, national parties with the temporary groups formed to defend particular rights or interests. His analysis, however, does disclose an irreducible truth about association. In effect, he says that freedom of association cannot be squeezed into the framework of specific activities. If men find they are refused the freedom to act in common in great matters, they will lose the taste for acting together in the small matters that concern them more directly; and vice versa: if their ability to intervene in the details of social life is restricted, they will not know how to judge nor what to demand. "For my part," he writes, "I could believe liberty less necessary in great matters than in small ones, if I thought one could be assured of the one without having the other." And he adds: "Subjection in small matters manifests itself every day and is felt unquestionably by all citizens. This does not lead them to despair, but it is a constant frustration and brings them to give up the use of their will. . . These citizens who have been made so dependent on a central power cannot be expected to be able to choose, from time to time, the representatives of that power; this exercise of their free will, so important, but temporary and seldom called upon, will not prevent them from little by little losing their power to think, to feel and to act on their own, and from falling gradually below the level of humanity."[28]

Tocqueville does not completely identify the political with the private, but he suggests that they are held together within the fabric of society and that any damage to democracy risks tearing it to pieces.

28. D, II, p. 326.

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For the rest, it is enough to examine the concept of social power. For a visible and localizable power whose action depends on those in charge of it, Tocqueville substitutes a diffuse and invisible power, both internal and external to individuals, both produced and experienced by them, constructed in the imagination as much as in reality, and operating in government, administration and opinion. So, while Tocqueville follows Constant in his attack on arbitrariness, his concern does not stop there. He recognizes the danger in claiming an absolute right of society. His language appears quite close to Constant's when he declares: "there is no citizen so obscure that it would not be very dangerous to oppress him." But the viewpoint is not the same. The evil is not just that of violating the right of an individual, but it also strikes at the agreement that links the individual's right to that of others, so that everyone fears for his safety. The evils come both from above as well as from below, inasmuch as men are dazzled by the image of a powerful society. That one does not feel even more struck by the existence of the other signifies that one-to-one relations are disappearing, that individual existence is becoming accidental *vis-à-vis* society.

Tocqueville notes on at least two occasions that this idea of social power dominates the imagination of both those who govern and those who obey the state. "Both conceive of government in the image of a single providential and creative power. All secondary political ideas are changeable; only this image remains fixed, unalterable. . . . Both those who govern and those who are governed pursue this idea with the same fervor."[29] He repeats this idea when he analyzes the new taste for uniformity: "The government loves what the citizens love and it naturally hates what they hate. This community of feelings which, in democratic societies, unites the individual and the ruler in one thought, establishes a secret and permanent sympathy."[30] Whether he speaks of the new liberty or the new servitude of the individual, he sees it operating at the heart of a form of political society, although he never allows his idea of the institution of this form of society to be separated from the institution of the individual.

His vision of democracy is sharp enough to allow him to grasp more than the complicity of governed and governors. At the same time, he grasps the complicity linking those determined to have order, who, fearing anarchy, advocate the strengthening of governmental power, with the opponents of that power, who act in the name of the people's cause, whether they call for a new revolution or create the models for a society free from all antagonism. "Even those battling against one another still agree on one point. . . . The unity, ubiquity, and omnipotence of power, and the uniformity of its rules form the leading characteristics of all the systems dreamed up in our times. They are found at the core of the strangest utopias. The human spirit pursues these images even in its dreams."[31] Once again, Tocqueville's perspective is dif-

29. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 302.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 299.

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ferent from Constant's. The socialist utopia is, in effect, built on a truth not recognized by a liberalism strictly founded on a theory of individual independence.

In opposition to Constant, Saint-Simon denounces the idea of a society whose only justification is the protection of the individual. In fact, his preface to *Le Système industriel* is the antithesis, term for term, of the doctrine of *Les Principes politiques.* Saint-Simon derides the idea that liberty could be the aim of all human association. In his view, human association is governed by an "aim of activity." In every instance, liberty can only be defined in terms of this aim; the aim is first, and liberty is only the means that allows men to pursue it. The idealization of the notion of contract hides a mystification; men in society do not associate in order to draw up laws for one another — one might as well imagine individuals coming together to draw up new rules for playing chess who, doing this, believe themselves actually playing the game. Political forms were the preoccupation of jurists in the days of the monarchy, but underlying those forms there is the foundation, and those in charge of the destiny of modern society must always take this foundation into consideration. As for political liberty, if it is taken to signify each citizen exercising his right to participate in or to control government, it comes down to delivering authority into the hands of chance and denying merit the right to direct public affairs, even when this merit is universally recognized elsewhere. Though different in their manifestations, Saint-Simon's arguments at least have the same basis: a critique of the abstractions characterizing the liberal theory of the individual.

But Tocqueville is not vulnerable to this criticism. Not only that, but Tocqueville himself takes it into account and reveals his secret sympathies with political realists. As we have said, individuals in his analysis are not seen as the first terms of an association whose only justification is that it guarantees their independence. Contracts and forms do not find their only reason for existence in the explanation and stabilization of these guarantees; their virtue is to maintain and express the marks of the differentiation and articulation of social relations that tend to destroy the belief in an absolute right of society. A government issuing from universal suffrage does not benefit from the advantages of expertise, but is valued much more for *its effects than its actions.*

In summary, Tocqueville's philosophy meets Saint-Simon's on its own ground. Toqueville is as interested as Saint-Simon is in the rise of modern society. His concern is to demonstrate, basing his case on American society, that society has the greatest vigor when the illusion of mastery of its organization is abandoned and initiatives are called up from all quarters, where the opinions and activities of men can escape the restraints of state control.

Instead of exchanging the notion of the sovereignty of society for sovereignty of the individual, he exposes the fiction hidden in the idea of the sovereignty of society — the fiction of a collective individual, of a *grand être* that could be described, delineated, its *foundation* discerned, and its *aim* determined. He shows that this fiction is inseparable from the image of omnipotent power. No matter that in the utopia this power is supposed to exist without

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coercion, regard itself as a science, call itself spiritual, and that it is founded on the consent of its subjects — it is still essentially despotic.

One understands why Saint-Simon rigorously subordinates the place of the individual to the imperative of social cohesion. This is not only because of the primacy he accords to organic periods — critical periods only act on individualism through dissolution of old principles, which is necessary for the gestation of a new form. The double image of a society that had come to know itself and of an organ of government in which this knowledge would be actualized implies that the individual is entirely part of society and that he is recognized, *known*. And since only a small number of people in society are competent to govern, citizens would be abandoned to obscurity if the goodness and rationality of the social organization were not made apparent to them, if they themselves did not participate in the grand spectacle provided by the social machine. The individual, then, is brought out of obscurity and the danger of his being lost in the crowd is averted whenever his attention is turned toward the common aim, through ceremonies and festivals that give a human face to society, celebrate the parts played by members of that society whether in industry or in the family, and which make each man visible to others.

The best measure of Tocqueville's liberalism is the comparison with the model offered by Saint-Simon, which is its exact opposite. Over and above Tocqueville's theories, which bear the imprint of classical theories, we can see in his work a new idea of the individual linked to the critique of a new union of power and science and of a society apparently visible to and able to be apprehended by its members. The admission of individual liberty — of that which is irreducible in each — goes hand in hand with the valorization of a political society that makes room for the unknowable and the uncontrollable. And, simultaneously, this society prohibits — so that it will not be overturned as a consequence of the dangers it produces — full vision of the social world in which each would be included.

Tocqueville is, of course, fully aware of the danger inherent in the isolation of individuals, the new phenomenon of the "man lost in the crowd." We know that he sees this phenomenon as one effect of equality of conditions — the other being love of independence — but he discovers that the conversion of this phenomenon into its opposite can give rise to despotism. He is too convinced of the irreversibility of the equality of conditions to believe that a good community can be established where everyone lives in plain sight and where each individual is understandable to all. Aristocratic society furnished this model. It is organized according to multiple levels of personal dependence. The same chain connected the last ring to the first, the peasant to the king. But "the very image of society was obscure and continually lost amidst all the powers that governed the citizens."[32] Men related to one another in the castle, the manor, the parishes, and the guilds, and everywhere everyone perceived all others as being either above or below himself. On the other hand, the dis-

32. *Ibid.*, p. 334.

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appearance of the figure of the *autre-proche*, the dissolution of an authority that guaranteed the nature of social bonds has a double consequence: the individual acquires a notion of society where he is defined as similar to others but where he sees neither himself nor others within society. But in renouncing his unique perspective, he cannot help but lose the marks of his own identity becoming absorbed in an anonymous vision. "As conditions in any society become more equal," he writes, "so individuals appear smaller and government greater, or rather, each citizen is lost in the crowd and *one sees only* the vast and magnificent image of the people"[33] He has a remarkable grasp of the alienation that accompanies the vision of the people as well as of the images of society and power. The moment individuals (constituted as such by the operation that isolates them from each other) are lost in the crowd, the vision that gives rise to the *grand être* suppresses them and swallows them up in the impersonal "one."

It is hardly necessary to note that Tocqueville does not take Saint-Simon as his target. He analyzes a process that is intimately intertwined with the democratic experience in order to disclose its dangers. When the utopians make up their model community, they are mistaken in failing to recognize its origin in this process. Furthermore, they try to actualize "the vast and magnificent image of the people" to the point of wanting it to be part of the life of individuals day after day. This image is fueled by the desire to extract individuals from anonymity and place them in the great light of the communal arena where everything and everyone is visible.

However, Tocqueville does not set the dream of a society in which everything is fully visible against the efficiency of a machine that ensures the coherence of the whole without anyone being aware of its workings because everyone is pursuing his own interests. When he observes that the image of society was obscure in aristocratic times, he does not consider this a virtue. His remarks on the true notion of liberty, which coincides with the reciprocal recognition of fellow creatures and the feeling of belonging not only to the same society but to the same humanity, leave no doubt as to his intentions. He insists that the new sense of equality, society and humanity can only be reconciled with liberty on condition that it never be realized. Desiring such a realization entails slipping into the imaginary, which would effect a split between the reign of opinion and the reign of power, between the reign of science and men who are subjugated. All of his work tends to convince us that the ideas of equality, society or humanity must remain latent, otherwise they will be converted into a terrifying fiction — the idea of equality is only fruitful if it surrenders itself to the intertwining of multiple and unique perspectives. Thus, the truth of independence of the individual is not that it is an indivisible unity but that it offers the eminent symbol of uniqueness.

In placing such strong emphasis on the evil effects of equality, does Tocqueville leave any possibility of pursuing the adventure of individual and political liberty? The end of the penultimate chapter of *De la dèmocratie* does change the

33. *Ibid.*, p. 298.

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direction of an argument that appeared to conclude that despotism is ineluctable. Recalling that "in the democratic centuries we are entering, men naturally have the taste for independence," he returns to the consequences: "Naturally they tolerate rules with impatience; the very permanence of the state they prefer bores them. They like power, but are inclined to mistrust and hate those who exercise it, and they easily slip between their hands because of their smallness and their very mobility."[34]

His optimism manifests itself in the conviction that "each new generation" will find "new arms to fight for the liberty of men." This is not based solely on the observation of facts, since the individual seems to have acquired a taste for independence that is itself linked to a political event of metaphysical significance: the breakup of the situation where *someone* in this or that social framework claims to be the sole agent of an unconditional authority. Tocqueville's remarks on the nature of this independence are, however, brief: the rise of equality can be summarized in the tendency men have "to follow only their will in their individual actions,"[35] a tendency that suggests "before long, the idea and the love of political liberty."

The relation Tocqueville establishes between *someone* and the idea of an unconditional authority is equally disappointing. Tocqueville aptly describes the phenomenon of personal dependence characteristic of the aristocratic world. But he does not really examine the function of the monarch whose very person was the evidence of legitimacy; who was supposed to embody the nation and whose power was supposed to come from God or the new lay deities, Reason and Justice. Thus he does not assess the full implications of the extraordinary event that marks the rise of modern democracy: the formation of a power deprived of its quality of embodiment and of the last foundations of legitimacy, and the simultaneous establishment of a relation to Law and Knowledge free from the relation to Power, making it impossible to refer to any principle that would place sovereignty above human thought and action. Although Tocqueville examines the new social power that testifies to the confinement of society within its own borders (he correctly interprets this as perversion), and although he simultaneously excludes any possibility of a return to the *Ancien Régime*, he avoids concluding that the experience of political and individual liberty, the rise of a new idea of power and of right coincides with a new experience of knowledge, the rise of a new idea of truth — i.e., that what once germinated only in the minds of a small number of men is now developed, diffused, and imprinted in social life. Tocqueville dared to declare, "he who looks to liberty for something besides itself is born to serve."[36] But he could not go further and say that whoever looks to truth for something other than itself is made to believe — and still to serve. He asks us to recognize (following La Boétie) that liberty does not teach those who do not desire, that it is not a defined, namable good; that to desire liberty is to possess it; that the

34. *Ibid.*, p. 339.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 295.
36. A, I, p. 144.

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quest for truth is of a piece with truth itself. Modern society and the modern individual established themselves as proof against the dissolution of the last vestiges of certitude. Thus was launched an adventure (continually threatened by the resistance it creates) in which the foundations of power, right and knowledge are put into question — a properly historical adventure that prohibits any stopping point where the limits of the possible and the thinkable move back indefinitely.

We have attempted elsewhere to examine the consequences of the phenomenon of disembodiment of power, notably, the experience of a society that can no longer represent itself in the model of a body, a society that admits division and its effects in all areas. We will only note here that changes in social institutions are no less sensible than in the individual. We must do more than simply insist that the individual, in withdrawing from the authority that the *other* incarnated by his social preeminence, henceforth freely takes what conforms to reason and justice for his only standard of conduct (or, conversely, that his rule would be to follow only his will). This idea, so often formulated with all its variations by the discourse of liberalism, does not consider that when reason and justice become the references solemnly distributed to individuals, they are handed over to individuals who act of their own accord, and to a discovery that springs from individuals exercising their unique power to know and to speak.

The methods used by the dominant ideology to impose its new criteria of social judgment are of little importance. Whatever their efficacy, they cannot definitively erase the work of the democratic revolution, i.e., the destruction of the foundations of legitimacy and truth. When an individual is defined as independent, he does not, as Tocqueville supposes, exchange one certitude for another — that which would now derive from his autonomy or, on the contrary, that which would stow away the power of opinion or science. He is pledged to keep working silently for incertitude. From the point where truth cannot rid itself of thought and where right links the individual to his own faculty of articulation, knowledge and lack of knowledge combine so that they cannot be cut off from one another. Still, this distinction cannot be thought and right does not take the novelty of the event into account, because the exercise of thought is modified when a right to think is affirmed. This right is undefined but it always makes inroads into what was previously forbidden. Such a right is not circumscribed by political limits. It touches all relations between the individual and the world, others, and himself. It touches all his thoughts; it *bases* them on the same sense that engendered them.

To permit thought and to accept life with thought, to welcome conflict and internal contradiction, to give thought an *equal* place (whether the thought is noble or base, formed as a result of knowledge or passion, through contact with other humans or with things); to consent to that which mixes up the distinction between interior and exterior — in short, everything that in Tocqueville's time distinguished the novel and literature in general — is the index of the new mode of existence of the individual in the horizons of democracy.

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This new individual not only rises up as the master of his own destiny, he is also dispossessed of the assurance of his own identity — of that which at another time appeared to secure his place, his condition in society and the connection to a legitimate power. To paraphrase Tocqueville speaking on America, the individual exhibits "a continually regenerative agitation," and that uncertainty about his own identity circulates "an anxious activity" in his spirit, "a superabundant energy" which the government that previously ruled over him (guaranteed by a just model) was "powerless to create." Or, to paraphrase the critique that we were formulating against Saint-Simon's utopia, the individual discovers himself without definition, without contours, without *basis* and without *aim.*

Now, even if we want to agree that the individual is constituted in part under the pole of a new indeterminacy that makes truth a question without an answer, we must challenge the alternative formulated by Tocqueville, or at least refrain from posing it in absolute terms. In such a formulation the individual either appears in full consciousness of self or he disappears entirely as a consequence of his weakness and isolation, dazzled by opinion and social power. This accords him at once too much and too little. It fails to recognize that his resourcefulness does not reside in the full positivity of the subject and that any attempt at slavery, however refined, will be checked because a part of the individual resists objectification.

The Tocquevillian idea of the reversibility of democratic liberty into servitude is still propagated today — and with good reason. It is not worth the effort to review all the evidence of this movement, in particular the multifarious efforts in the direction of the "normalization" of the individual. Still, those who denounce this danger most strongly, following Tocqueville, believe that the project can be accomplished. They willingly decide on the future destruction of the individual, while reserving the faculty to think it in complete independence. It is one thing to perceive the ambiguities of the democratic experience, but it is quite another to decide that the question of the individual (especially as it is linked to the question of truth) can be suppressed. In spite of all its faults, for those who suffer totalitarian oppression, democracy remains the only desirable form of society because it conserves the double notion of political and individual liberty.

The most remarkable criticism of democracy is divulged in the persistence of the representation of the man "lost in the crowd." It feeds the horror of anonymity and the attraction of a community whose members would know the happiness of communal being. Tocqueville does not share the latter desire. But it is striking that the aversion he shared with men of his class for any form of popular mobilization did not keep him from finding the sign of the destruction of the individual in the image of the crowd. Isn't it worth the effort, in this regard, to be attentive to an ambiguity? Is anonymity absolutely evil? The answer is yes if one wants to make an acting subject of the individual, or the community, or both at the same time. But if one agrees that the individual backs off from himself in relating to himself, that he is at close quar-

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ters with his unknown, why deny the bond between solitude and anonymity? Why deny that the recognition of fellow creature for fellow creature also passes for ignorance accepted by the other? And why, finally, object to the notion that we must consider truth of association and truth of isolation together? Let us establish the apology for individualism in response to the apology for the democracy of the mass, where everything occurs as if we were ineluctably thrown back on nearly two centuries of the denial of the other.

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Notes And Commentary:

RADICAL AND CONSERVATIVE CRITIQUE: A CONFERENCE REPORT

by John Alt

The *Telos* editorial board has not been unaffected by the progressive disintegration of the left over the last few years, a disintegration precipitated by the rapid fading of the Marxist model — whether Western, Marxist-Leninist, or other — and the inability to substitute a new one to confront the rise of neo-conservatism. Various factions, consequently, have developed that can roughly be identified as Habermasian, post-Adornian (the artificial negativity wing), proto-Freudian, or even post-structuralist. At the same time, the journal's turn toward more political themes has also generated heated internal debate over the German peace movement, feminism, the nature of the Soviet Union, etc. Notwithstanding the fact that there seems to be absolutely no correlation between theoretical and political divides, it was generally felt that an "internal" conference dealing with a number of these topics might help clarify the various outlooks and new developments. Hence the conference, held at the New School for Social Research in New York, December 1 and 2, 1984. The meetings were organized around five panels that dealt, respectively, with philosophy, social movements, culture, American foreign policy, and the fate of liberalism and socialism.

The philosophy panel took up the themes of the crisis of critical philosophy, the impact of post-structuralism, neo-conservatism, and *Telos*' relation to all this. Presentations were made by Joel Whitebook, Paul Piccone and Seyla Benhabib, with comments by Agnes Heller. Whitebook observed that *Telos* had grown away from philosophy in recent years. Attempting to explain this shift, he speculated that at the journal's beginning there had been some consensus about the basic categories of Western Marxism and their adequacy for understanding events in the late 1960s and early '70s. However, in the '70s, according to Whitebook's account, confidence in Western Marxism declined while Habermas' work began to attract increasing attention.

The impact of Habermas was to academicize left philosophy and to locate major flaws in critical theory — most specifically, an undifferentiated anti-modernism and a lack of appreciation for universalistic values. The appreciation of universalistic values, however, is what has often made *Telos* vulnerable to charges of having become neo-liberal in recent years. Whitebook thus raised the question concerning how to internalize this appreciation of liberal values while still remaining radical. He further noted that the post-structuralists appeared on the scene at the same time as Habermas and began competing with Critical Theory as an emancipatory paradigm. In terms of the self-understanding of the actors in the new social and cultural movements, the post-structuralists may even be carrying the day. Whitebook pointed to the irony that the post-structuralists are celebrating exactly what critical theorists have traditionally abhorred: the decline of the individual and the deconstruction of reason. Yet, a new generation of critical theorists are entering into a dialogue with the French thinkers. *Telos*, however, has so far avoided this debate. Whitebook concluded with a plea for *Telos* to re-enter the philosophical arena, noting that academic philosophy was perhaps

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more interesting today than it had been in the previous three decades.

Piccone spoke next on the need to rethematize all left concepts as well as to reconsider *Telos*' conception of the project of the left. Piccone would have all concepts continually reconstituted, not merely jettisoned or retained. He rejected Whitebook's suggestion that he wanted to rehabilitate Hegelian Marxism, advocating instead an authentic transcendence of the "dialectical heritage." In this vein, he criticized Habermas, accusing him of giving up too much, and defended what he sees as needing no defense — i.e., modernity and universal values. Such a defense of a critical theory version of "motherhood, apple pie and the American way," he claimed, belabors the obvious and adds nothing theoretically new. While effective against Nazism, fascism and other forms of 20th-century irrationalism, such a defense is either trivial in the U.S. or apologetic abroad in a socio-political context where it effectively translates into advocacy of the international marketing of Americanism and a plea for free trade. In a context where the future of imperialism is no longer guaranteed by the Marines or B-52s but, instead, by the hegemony of American culture and the unequal exchange of monopoly-priced goods for competitively-priced products, the ideological function of Habermas' approach is all the more pervasive since it is clothed in radical garb.

Piccone expressed hope that, with *Telos* relocating in New York, a major conceptual housecleaning would take place, making room for a new radical agenda that would go beyond the mere defense of or dialogue with liberalism and French post-structuralism. He outlined four key concepts, integral to left theory, that need thorough overhaul: individuality, socialism, rationality and democracy.

Regarding individuality, Piccone accused the left of never having adequately clarified what it meant by this. It has vacillated between the two equally untenable poles of bourgeois individuality and socialist "social individuality." The former has been subjected to too much criticism in leftist literature to require further attacks (although the Habermasians tend to forget this and still recycle it with straight face). The latter, on the other hand, has had an even more tragic history. As developed, e.g., by the Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness*, it leads to the myth of the superordinate collective, which results in "really existing socialism" kidnapping consciousness for the party apparatus, with all dissenters shipped off to the Gulag.

The meaning of socialism has all but collapsed, leaving no apparent alternatives. Socialism simply cannot achieve the economic efficiency or political liberty of capitalism because it is caught in a "hyperrationalist trap." This means it can never relate to the pre-rational dimension of life as well as capitalism can. Since the collective individuality of the party allows for only an atomistic, abstract individuality among its members, socialism can only result in the creation of mechanical forms of social associations. Since socialism does not allow for morality, trust, friendship, community, or anything else existing on the pre-rational plane, the critique of socialism coincides with the critique of bureaucracy. Neo-conservatism has thus succeeded in incorporating the best ideas of the New Left: the theme that hyper-rationality quashes life and the corresponding recognition that humans must re-establish contact with the pre-rational dimension by overcoming reification and alienation.

Third, substantive rationality cannot guarantee meaningful goals and should be abandoned altogether. The problem with formal goals is that they reify present conditions and prevent the expression of new human intentions. In this sense, the formal defense of modernity, as found in Habermas, only reaffirms the present. The commitment to modernity has nothing to do with either the left or radicalism, and to claim otherwise is an occupational hazard of impotent academics desperately seeking political relevance.

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Piccone's solution would start with a call for leftists to be more honest with themselves and admit that most are regular academics claiming to be radical at a time when to be so is chic. Veterans from the New Left who have secured teaching jobs in universities still need radical credentials for self-justification and, occasionally, even for careerist reasons, he claimed. But defending modernity has nothing radical about it: at best, in Piccone's view, it amounts only to reproducing the predominant cultural forms and defending them against long-since defeated ghosts of particularism, traditionalism and feudalism. Following Adorno's critique of identity logic, Piccone rejected most rationalist efforts in defense of modernity as ideological and only pseudo-rational. He argued that *Telos* should not be radical in this phony sense. But, while contending that capitalist rationality is superior to its socialist counterpart in its flexibility, he called on intellectuals to reject both market and planning rationality in favor of a framework characterized by constant criticism and feed-back to keep social and economic life well regulated and concerned with the pursuit of the "good life."

Fourth and last in Piccone's list is democracy, which remains problematic in the absence of the necessary condition of individuality. With the spread of "sub-individuality" due to the widely documented erosion of intelligence, common sense, skills, pre-rational morality, norms of civility, and the like, such conditioned masses invite and further justify encroachments on democratic institutions. In any event, "sub-individuals" can easily be manipulated by the moral theatrics of Reaganism as a cover for the self-aggrandizement of elites and corporations. In such a context, vindicating democracy along the lines Habermas does amounts to arguing primarily for the political privileges of intellectuals who alone have the time and skill to participate in the debates that are at the heart of the democratic process. Far from resulting in democratization, however, such ideological vindication of democracy can, at best, only shift power and privilege away from one group and to another. Genuine concerns with democratization would have to address the socio-economic and psychological conditions that prevent participation rather than focusing on formal requirements for undistorted communication in ideal speech situations open only to intellectuals primarily engaged in increasing their own political power.

Piccone concluded that it is difficult to keep criticizing things as long as we do not have any viable alternatives to them. But if that is our predicament, then it is better to admit this than to continue offering false alternatives.

Seyla Benhabib next outlined a critique of Lyotard's "Post-Modern Condition" (since published in *New German Critique*). She began by arguing, with Whitebook, that contemporary philosophy was indeed in an unusually interesting and potentially fruitful situation. Following Bernstein, she described the basic poles of the discussion as a fallibalistic foundationalism and a contextualist relativism. The latter camp, in turn, breaks down into two poles of its own: Derrida vs. Rorty.

What Benhabib found interesting in Lyotard is his position somewhere between the scandalizing avant-gardism of Derrida and the complacent conservatism of Rorty. While she was sympathetic to Lyotard's appeal for a plurality of life forms, she was skeptical about his disavowal of grounding that plurality. Despite himself, she claimed, he tacitly appeals to certain norms of validation. Her criticisms of Rorty were much stronger, claiming that he intentionally moved in the direction of neo-conservatism in dismissing as alienated (mainly German) intellectuals any and all who are uneasy with the state of contemporary Western societies. Rorty thus accuses Habermas of wanting to scratch where most people don't even itch. Benhabib's response to this: Rorty ought to develop some itches of his own.

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In commenting on all this, Agnes Heller quoted Lukács' observation that in a good household everything can be put to use. But, in response to Piccone's presentation, she questioned whether we were all even living in the same household. Once we exclude the concepts of democracy, socialism, rationalism, enlightenment, etc., she claimed, we are no longer in the household of radical democracy. Clearly, Piccone lived in a different house, where the qualifier "radical" had not succeeded in occluding the conformist character of "democracy." If one rejects all forms of substantive values, she asked, what is left? Regarding Benhabib's contribution, she objected to any philosophical proclamation that would declare that after X, a certain form of philosophy is no longer possible — specifically, that after the so-called linguistic turn, philosophy of consciousness can no longer be done. In this respect, she cited John Searle, who has returned to a philosophy of consciousness. She noted that far from being something entirely novel, deconstructionism could be dated back to Gorgias.

Next, she raised the question of whether philosophy should be academic. Several contemporary philosphers in the academy have managed to raise some important philosophical questions, she noted. Kant's distinction between the *Weltphilosoph* and the *Schulphilosoph* can no longer be maintained, she claimed, and the contemporary philosopher should combine both. Although we can't predict the future as prophets might nor should we tell people what to do, we can provide conceptions of alternative futures — and if we cannot do this, we are indeed sterile. Against Piccone, Heller maintained it was dangerous to provide images of negative futures, and against Benhabib, she appealed for more pluralism in philosophy, arguing that one philosophy cannot address everything and that human beings suffer in too many diverse ways for there to be just one philosophy.

The issue of the ambiguity of radical and conservative discourse received one of its more political discussions in the second panel on the meaning of contemporary social movements. The chief panelists, stressing the obsolescence of traditional left-right categories, generated active discussion around a number of fundamental issues: fundamentalist vs. self-limiting features of social movements, the nature of the normative role of the intellectual, whether bipolar categories of traditional political action are historically obsolete, and whether critical theory can play a role beyond the formal specification of emancipatory criteria in favor of a theory of dialectical social change.

Jean Cohen discussed the new emancipatory features of contemporary movements from a critical theoretical framework. In her opening remarks she defended *Telos* as a medium of "post-Marxian criticism," by which she meant a dialogue between the democratizing dimensions of Marxism and the workers' movements on the one hand, and comparable features within the new feminist, peace, ecological, and autonomous movements on the other. As against the productivism and instrumentalized politics of Marxism and the workers' movements, the new movements represent a qualitative break from the past with new social concerns and politically self-limiting action. Yet the movements also have fundamentalist and politically regressive features that must be critically distinguished from their genuine emancipatory qualities.

Cohen distinguished between conservative and radical critiques of contemporary social movements. She identified the "conservative critique" as the "revolt against modernity" perspective. This viewpoint claims that the new movements are romantically regressive in their themes of limited growth, hostility to over-complexity, rejection of state control of social life, expressive life styles, and so forth. The conservatives uphold a model of bureaucratic, consumer capitalism as the progressive essence of modernity. In these terms, the post-industrial and consensual participation themes of the new movements are condemned.

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The problems with this theoretical approach, she contended, are twofold. First, the critique does not distinguish between the destruction of a traditional life-world by capitalist development and state administration *and* the increased rationalization of already modernized life-worlds (e.g., nuclear family, egalitarian principles, public space, voluntary associations, etc.). It is as popular reaction to the second process — the defense of the autonomy and solidarity of modern life-worlds — that contemporary social movements have emancipatory potential. Second, the conservative critique is unable to theorize what is new in social movements. This newnesss is in the sphere of democratic action, characterized by anti-asceticism, de-emphasis of strategic instrumentalism, critique of economic growth, and the more general call for the democratization of bureaucratically managed economic and social spheres. These themes go beyond the traditional formal liberalism adhered to by the conservative critics, yet are consistent with and extend the universalistic norms of public discourse and egalitarianism.

Cohen noted a special case of those unable to "theorize the new:" liberals and leftists who, like Jean Elshtain, uncritically defend the traditions of family or religion as a viable source of ethical interaction. These critics tend to reduce modernity and the new movements to a problem of unfettered egoism or life-style expressiveness, as threats to the necessary social-ethical basis of human solidarity. Against them, Cohen insisted that the new movements are not the cause of moral disintegration but are rather protests and alternatives to the disintegration of worldviews and ethics, bureaucratic rationalization, and the spread of egoistic cynicism and narcissism. In addition to rejecting the approach of the fundamentalist critics (who disavow economic and political rationalization in favor of the traditional authority of family and community), Cohen rejected the alternatives offered by the formal defenders of modernity (capitalism and state administration as necessary conditions for human rights and distributive justice). The latter don't realize that increased rationalization implies the abrogation of the system's guiding normative principles (rights and justice), while the former imply a fundamentalist mode of authority that represses rights and the idea of justice associated with modernity. Both, meanwhile, are reluctant to engage in discussion, preferring to convert rather than persuade and suppressing alternative views. In contrast, Cohen argued that what is new about today's social movements is their emphasis on discursive reason, which actually defends and extends the achievements of modernity.

Cohen's final theme was the new, democratic, non-absolutist character of today's movements. Their self-limiting character, which renounces redemptive absolutism and any theory of progress or history, distinguishes them from past movements. She offered four components to this self-limiting character: First, the movements seek to defend or extend limited spaces for autonomy and public action rather than promote the revolutionary transformation of society. Second, there is a plurality of groups and organizations with differentiated interests and goals instead of just one hegemonic organization or perspective. This revival of social pluralism is based on tolerance of difference and the achievement of consensus through debate. Third, self-limitation entails an openness to debate to settle issues pertaining to values and norms instead of blind obedience to traditional moral authority. And fourth, there is a democratic defense of the structural differentiation of modern civil society — the economic, political, and social spheres — rather than a traditional or revolutionary re-integration.

In conclusion, Cohen emphasized that the new movements are internally contradictory. She illustrated this point with the ecology movement and its tension be-

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tween a communicatively reinterpreted ethic of responsibility to nature and the romantic, fundamentalist anti-industrialism of those who appeal to nature as a counter-utopia. Yet, the substance of her presentation was Habermas' theory of modernity wherein some groups and organizations utilize the positive achievements of modernity — e.g., discursive rationality — to challenge and civilize the destructiveness of technical rationalization emanating from the economic and political spheres. There is, therefore, a simple historical contrast between contemporary movements of a self-limiting character (which are "progressive") and those movements that were linked to mass industrialization, traditional authority, or an absolutist ideology (and which are "regressive").

For Cohen, then, the critical theory of modernity is a hermeneutic model used to specify, somewhat abstractly, the cultural intentions and characteristics of those actions referred to as feminist, pacifist, ecological, and expressive of autonomy, arguing that such actions constitute progressive social movements. The blind neo-conservative defense of modernity and the fundamentalist rejection of modernity are considered conservative for their rejection of the essence of the new movements — the defense and extension of democratic discourse in private and public life.

Taking a cue from Cohen, Heller addressed political and social movements, too, though in a more general manner and from the viewpoint of the irrationality of reified "bipolar coding." The West's industrialization period has left a legacy of such codes — left-right, progress-backwardness, radical-liberal and progressive-conservative — which have become irrelevant as guides to the complexities of modern society. Such codes lost their innocence and coherence with the totalitarianism associated with Nazism and Stalinism, where the polarization of antagonistic groups and ideas led to the use of total power to annihilate the adversarial or alien "other." And in the modern period, the application of such traditional codes has become irrelevant.

Heller attacked not just the substance of traditional codes but also the very use of coding in politics and movements. Polar coding is inherently destructive of any claim to freedom because of the hegemonic conflict inherent in the use of extreme, antinomic codes, she maintained. In addition, they oversimplify complex realities. Given this complexity, the bipolar codes inhibit the thematization of contingencies, alternative perspectives, and social imagination itself. The repression of diverse and "weak" coding has only served the interests of the powerful, who have mobilized the masses through the irrational appeal of bipolar codes.

Heller proposed substituting weak coding for bipolar coding in modern politics. Political codes would be weak enough so that power could be the means to open up alternative ideas and issues, which could then be democratically resolved. Reminiscent of Habermas' model of rational discourse, she advocated a commitment to the rules of what she termed "analytic discourse." This would entail the rejection of any bipolar coding that had not been rationally and empirically scrutinized, a public framework tolerant of diverse views, grasping complexity through the recognition of issue affinities, and the continual re-evaluation of all codes through the moral principle of equal freedom for all. Feminism she pointed to as meeting these charcteristics of weak coding and analytical discourse: "consensus on the supreme principle, dissent concerning ideas and issues, the recognition of a fair variety of interrelated issues opens the way for alternatives, new experience, novel interpretations of old experiences, thus for contingencies in the present and the future alike."

She concluded with a comment on the meaning of contemporary conservatism as a defense of the family and religion (but, since Auschwitz, no longer race) in the face of change. Here she seemed to indicate the continuing presence of strong bipolar codes

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in contemporary politics and movements. Yet she failed to note one of the most important examples of recent bipolar coding: the way, that is, that the Reagan movement has successfully incorporated conservative coding (traditional authority, family, religion) in its justification of the further corporatization of the economy — which actually undermines conservative values.

Formal commentary was provided by Paul Breines. His basic theme, thrown in a number of directions, was that social movements have a positive moment in their "communitarianism," presumably an experience of moral solidarity with others around freely shared concerns and actions. In this sense, he implied that *Telos* itself is a social movement, albeit a small one. Personally, he noted, he regretted the absence of a "big" social movement, even one tainted with redemptive or fundamentalist impulses, and in so noting, he challenged the strong tendency among *Telos* editors to reject all redemptive and fundamentalist politics. He pointed out the irony of those who, in their eagerness to escape one-dimensional coding, end up using it as a blanket condemnation of movement communitarianism or fundamentalism.

In the open discussion that followed, Juan Corradi criticized both Cohen and Heller. Cohen's rich analytic model he accused of abstractness. Although it claimed to represent reality, it was in fact distant and idealistically imposed. Corradi faulted Cohen for spending too much time analyzing the meaning of social movements in hypothetical situations, when what is needed is a diagnosis of the kind of era we live in and of the significance of social movements in it. While Cohen's description of the new social movements had an appeal, it did not correspond to any *real* social movements as we know them and which are characterized by dogmatism, intolerance, manipulation and a lot of other unappealing features that don't readily fit in with Cohen's reading of social reality through Habermasian spectacles.

Heller he challenged on the matter of her rejection of bipolar coding. Inasmuch as it is a function of speech, he said, it may well be inescapable, and even if it does not have to be bipolar, it still must be paradigmatic. Further, the language of politics is by definition bipolarized, especially in times of political urgency. Corradi also found it difficult to speak of the endless qualification of political coding, noting that the only practical solutions to strong coding have been cultural and aesthetic, not political.

Cohen answered Breines by saying she had not meant a total rejection of fundamentalism, since all movements contain some fundamentalism. She had intended instead to specify the role of the theorist as critic of fundamentalism from the viewpoint of modernity's achievements. To Corradi, she defended the abstractness of her approach, which she saw as its strength. While she agreed that objective, structural analyses of the place of movements in history is needed, she noted that a totalizing theory of society is normally out of touch with the intentional actions of movements.

Stanford Lyman then pointed out the inadequacy of the traditional liberal approach to inequality. It has failed to address the vestiges of inequality and, therefore, an additional, more positive criterion has to be added to achieve justice (rectification), he claimed.

Andrew Arato replied to Breines and Corradi. Against Breines' defense of fundamentalism, Arato argued that there is a contradiction between fundamentalism and democracy that could only have emerged with modernity. The burden is upon those who defend such movements to show how social movements with fundamentalist dimensions can have democratizing potential. Arato then introduced "communalism," arguing that even it tends to be intolerant of someone else's interests. He concluded that the best approach to the issue of community is through discursive

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reason rather than the unreflected obedience of fundamentalism. And, agreeing with Corradi, Arato commented that it is difficult to avoid bipolar coding, especially on the level of meta-theory, as in the case of establishing a general definition of freedom to distinguish it from unfreedom as well as from the freedoms of small, competing social groups.

Ferenc Feher then weighed in, addressing points raised by Breines and Corradi. He lamented Breines' nostalgia. The earlier period of left certitude for Feher was, in any event, the certitude of false knowledge. The contemporary period of experimentation was much better than the old period of false certitude, he claimed. Responding to Corradi, Feher made two points. First, he noted there is not one langauge of politics, but many. Second, Heller's semiological argument, moving from strong to weak coding, has an underlying premise regarding the meaning of socialism. A pluralistic, non-redemptive socialism, he said, responding to different social spheres, may allow for the possibility of a weak code. Therefore, the question of codes is related to the issue, raised initially by Piccone, of the meaning of socialism and of the collapse of the traditional hegemonic meaning of state socialism.

Heller then threw out some comments. To Corradi, she pointed out that the discursive rationality of modernity has broken down traditional antinomies and fundamentalist claims of good and evil, etc., so that we no longer accept them. In such times, the responsibility of the intellectual is to undertake critical analysis of the validity claims made by fundamentalist codes. She reiterated Lyman's comments that traditionally, the freedom of all to enter the marketplace through equal opportunity was a clear and strong code demonstrating "progress," and those in opposition to this code were labeled "conservative." As Lyman suggested, it is no longer that simple. Progressive and conservative make no sense if equal opportunity is formally granted while human nature and social structure (residual discrimination, class power, etc.) is unreflectively assumed.

An audience member criticized Heller's argument as overly rationalistic if not ignorant of the polarized nature of everyday life for some groups. Heller replied by distinguishing between the necessity of coding in everyday life and culture and the contingency of bipolar coding in politics, which, in any case, can never be progressive and only serves the interest of domination. Breines followed up by suggesting situations where social movements intervened in social and political life with anti-bipolar codes: the civil rights movement, he cited as one such instance — more specifically, SNCC, where the movement's actions were geared to breaking down the bipolar coding that had been built up around race relations and violence.

A final and brief exchange occurred when Whitebook told Cohen he didn't know what she meant by qualitative change. Cohen replied that it is not a choice between redemptive revolutionary politics and soulless reformism. The concept of social movements as self-limiting utopias reconciles the two extremes and constitutes a theory of qualitative change. In any case, she added, it is not our task to theorize on the possibility of qualitative, redemptive utopianism, but to clarify the relation between the normative achievements of modernity and contemporary struggles or movements. On that note, the panel on social movements ended.

The last panel on the first day was on varieties of cultural criticism, with presentations by José Casanova and Russell Jacoby, with comment by Peter Steinfels and Marshall Berman. Casanova, taking off from an article of his that appeared in *Telos* 59, dealt with the relation between modernity and religion and the political meaning of religious revivalism. He began with the secularization thesis which, as developed by Berger, Luckmann, and Bellah, maintains that religion's function in the modern world

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is to legitimize the autonomy and expressiveness of the individual. Religion becomes subjective and private, losing its traditional capacity to provide an objectified conception of the world with truth claims defined around redemption. Along with the expulsion of religion from the spheres of economy, society, and state, secularization has meant anomic subjectivity, or the loss of meaning and social relatedness. But anomie generates religious revival, new religious movements, the human potential movement, fundamentalist revival, and renewal of established churches. While all are lumped together under the category of religious revival, the four are quite different responses to the crisis of modernity and have different practical consequences as well.

The new religious movements, especially Eastern ones, have led to inner-worldly mysticism. The earlier counter-cultural forms have dissipated and few of their insights into nature and community have been incorporated into the established religious of everyday life. The human potential movement reflected the crisis of achievement motivation and entailed secular strategies of self-empowerment. The new religious and secular movements reflected modernity yet never produced a coherent critique of its crisis. Their mysticism and motivational techniques only stabilized a floundering subjectivity.

The fundamentalist revival, while at times openly critical of modernity, is mainly a reactionary attempt to slow down and gloss over the contradictions of capitalist rationalization. It entails a return to a romanticized liberal capitalism with its free markets, limited state, and strong family and community life linked to moral religiosity. Of course, this nostalgic blend of antinomic principles cannot solve the contradictions of advanced capitalism. And, ironically, fundamentalism has incorporated many of the strategies of technical rationalization to both gain converts and control state politics as a tool to impose its vision on others.

The revival of established churches is more complex. Specifically, Casanova argued that the Catholic revival has a more positive potential to reconstitute the project of modernity beyond the capitalist model. Catholics do not accept the relegation of religion and morality to the private sphere. There is a religious theory of common moral good, and of the moral necessity of the social parts to adapt to the common good. In this sense, Catholicism maintains the principle of a common ethical life. Catholicism has been progressive in repoliticizing certain issues: social justice and liberation theology in Latin America; the reconstitution of civil society in Poland; foreign policy and poverty in North America. The key issue in this revival is whether it encourages free moral discourse on specific issues or closes such debate off in favor of dogmatic interpretations of the church hierarchy.

Steinfels provided a brief commentary, indicating that Casanova had not said if religious revivalism had challenged or overturned the secularization thesis. He observed that secular pluralism is in contradiction to the new religious fundamentalism, raising new questions and fears regarding the proper role of religion — issues exemplified in the recent court controversies over creches on public land.

Berman spoke next, reading passages from *The Brothers Karamazov*, which he called a classic modernist text. The parable of the Grand Inquisitor, he maintained, reveals the modernist dilemma between the security of submission to authority and the anomie of existential freedom and choice. Religion has always embodied the ambivalence of these two sentiments, with contemporary neo-conservatives being nostalgic for the security fundamentalism provides. Berman himself opted for anomic subjectivity, admitting that it is very hard to communicate inner experience, but that there none-

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theless is a pressing need to do so. Wrestling with the ambiguity of inner conflict and communicating this to others is the condition and challenge of modernity. In contrast, the frightening tendency in religion is the renewed fear of this subjectivity and an attempt to nail it down within authoritarian dogma. Berman concluded by cautioning that we must learn to be at home in the ambiguity of modernity, recognizing that it is no expression of any contemporary crisis of culture, but has been the very condition of modernity since 1789.

Jacoby spoke next, identifying the problem with conservative cultural critics is their seeing culture as autonomous and socially destructive. Unwilling to address the economic and social structure of society, they confuse cause and effect, attributing to culture what is also a structural phenomenon. If controversies regarding hedonism are stripped from the social and economic structure, the conclusions are strictly authoritarian: the restoration of order through external control. In contrast, hedonism reveals not simply cultural anomie, but the breakdown of society itself. Moreover, Jacoby continued, hedonism is probably just a red herring: there is little pleasure in this society due to such things as advertising and consumerism.

Jacoby contended it is becoming more difficult to speak of culture as autonomous or coherent. Whether the culture of everyday life or that of the avant-garde, culture is increasingly intertwined with everything else. It makes no sense to say culture is different from civilization or is in contradiction with capitalism. With no coherent culture, how can there be cultural criticism? Some leftist critics seem to agree with this, suggesting that we are in a period of post-modernity. This position, represented by Frederic Jameson, has discarded the classical language of cultural criticism in favor of a celebration of sorts of the new merging of popular culture and mass culture. Post-modern cultural "criticism" uncritically reflects the current absorption of culture within the society of late capitalism.

A particular problem facing critical theory, especially *Telos*, is that its cultural criticism has been too scholastic, too removed from the language of ordinary people. In contrast the language of neo-conservatives tends to reflect popular fears and hopes. Jacoby argued that critical theorists must reclaim a mode of popular cultural criticism grounded in the traditions of Veblen and C. Wright Mills, who spoke a public language now claimed by the new right. Yet it is necessary to retain the elitist notion of critique in cultural criticism and not slide over into an uncritical populism as represented by Marshall Berman. The need is for a critical embrace of culture based on standards of validity independent of that culture and which neither celebrate nor reject culture in its own terms.

In the general discussion, Casanova replied to Steinfels' doubts about religious revivalism's challenge to secularization. Yes, he agreed, so far as modernity is understood as structurally differentiated, autonomous spheres, the repoliticization of religion and the remoralization of politics questions the autonomy of these spheres. Revivalism also challenges the privacy of religion, the autonomy of the self, and the autonomy of economic and political rationalization.

Cohen asked Steinfels whether it is possible to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate religious presences in the public sphere. Steinfels restated the dilemma, pointing to the case of Pawtucket, R.I., where the city's attempt to place a creche on city property resulted in suit by liberals concerned with pluralist freedoms. The key point, he argued, is whether a religious issue is open to public deliberation or imposes the paradigmatic expression of a particular group. Some religious people feel that the First Amendment is used by others to remove issues from public discourse — as with abor-

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tion, where Planned Parenthood argues that it is not a matter for public deliberation or politics, but a private question. In this sense, religion can be a positive force in politicizing issues, as Casanova argued. Yet Steinfels, agreeing with Berman, warned that fundamentalism can be a source of intolerance.

Arato added that the essence of the religious experience is a relation to the sacred, which is a fundamental and exclusive thing. While such fundamentalism has no room for "maybes," in certain contexts in can perform a mobilizing and democratizing function. For example, the Polish church exists in a public sphere created by others and not itself, yet this involvement, while fundamentalist, also contributes to democracy by expanding the groups and the terms of the discourse. The same thing happens in liberation theology, when the church is opposed to established regimes. Arato's point was that religious fundamentalism, when not in power, does mobilize people to participate in the public sphere and broadens the scope of possible discussion.

The discussion ended with a bang, when Lyman exploded in anger at Steinfels, distressed by his remark that some of his Jewish friends were upset by the creche issue. The issue of First Amendment freedoms is not something that concerns only Jews, Lyman noted. He argued that liberals and radicals alike should demand the courts overturn any state involvement in religion, be it prayer in the schools, singing Christmas carols, or the like. Any erosion of the separation between state and religion could lead to the establishment of a state religion, he said. We must distinguish between allowing the public discussion of religious questions and state-sponsorship of formal religious practices.

Opening the second day of the conference was the longest and most politically complex panel — that on foreign and military policy. Participants were Arato, Corradi, and Feher, with comments by Kovel and Moishe Postone. Arato introduced the panel with the remark that debates on foreign policy have been central to *Telos*. He argued that the key issue in such debates has been democracy, notwithstanding Piccone's critique and the "ultra-Bolshevik alternative." Moreover, he claimed, democracy is central to a reconsideration of socialism itself as "radical democracy" in the form of a plurality of democratic spheres. Disagreeing with Perry Anderson's recent comments that the substance of traditional socialism should be transformed through the language of democracy, Arato argued that while the gain would be the addition of a theory of the political, the loss would be the failure to acknowledge new political realities, especially the logic of state systems and modernity's differentiated spheres.

In his own formal presentation, Arato continued to argue for the importance of a theory of democracy that would include the principles of representative democracy, workers' democracy, and civil and human rights. The presence of such democratic systems, however weak or ill-formed, are worth defending. Moving on to foreign policy, Arato made two points: nuclear deterrence is necessary under present conditions, and nuclear parity between the superpowers has created a politically novel situation in Europe. The placement of the cruise missiles has increased the nuclear threat and the level of anxiety, and has weakened the link between the U.S. and Europe, leading to the perception among Europeans that they have been abandoned and are being used for superpower politics. The peace movement has not adequately confronted this new state of affairs. First, unilateral disarmament is a bad strategy, given that the missiles of both sides are now a threat. Moreover, it implies that Europe is not worth defending, increases the level of anxiety, and contributes to a pacifism that would undermine conventional warfare. Second, with regard to the Soviet Union, Arato argued that it is a

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false issue whether the Soviets would launch a first strike. The Soviet Union depends on advanced Western technology since it provides stabilization and renders unnecessary any internal reforms. Another reason why the Soviets are not likely to destroy Western Europe is its need for the latter's resources to develop Eastern Europe so as to prevent Western Europe from becoming an overwhelming cultural and social alternative. Arato concluded that the alternative to unilateral disarmanent is a united European defense — though he conceded this was not likely.

Feher's paper dealt with the West's relation to foreign wars, movements, and revolutions, and the possibility of the West playing an emancipatory role there. To analyze the problem, he began by questioning whether there is a secret pact between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. that divides the world into spheres of influence. Such a pact does exist, though it is hardly secret: the Yalta-Potsdam agreement, whose continuing relevance has been indicated in recent diplomatic memoirs and foreign policy statements. Feher asserted that this functional cooperation between the two systems implies a global conspiracy. Under such conditions, the emancipatory role the West can play is very limited.

Ideally, however, the West can play an emancipatory role through a return to the principles of liberalism that respect human rights and the self-determination of nations. This means the rejection of any policy based on security first, freedom second (including Kirkpatrick's recent defense of authoritarian regimes as being necessary for freedom). There is also a contradiction between human rights and self-determination that arises when a tyranny rejects outside intervention, citing its right to self-determination. Feher then outlined three possible modes of Western action in terms of which these two normative principles can be reconciled: first, the West can use the threat of withholding aid to promote respect for human rights without violating the offending country's right to self-determination; second, it can lend support to any collective determination to resist or overthrow a totalitarian regime; third, in cases where regimes are practicing genocide, the West can respond with military action or by withholding all support. In summary, the West under certain conditions can play an emancipatory role, though it cannot be a liberator, since people fear and often resist armed foreign liberators even if the express purpose is for the people's own benefit.

The strategic dilemma for the left is whether it can do anything to return Western governments to the principles of doctrinaire liberalism — indeed, whether such a strategy is itself not a capitulation of leftist ideals to the liberal paradigm. Liberalism should be seen as an expression of modernity's democratization process, and not something peculiar or reducible to capitalist interests. Thus, liberalism can help contain imperial logics and promote the free actions of nations and classes. But first, the left must abandon its bipolar myths of left and right, acknowledging that leftist regimes can be oppressive. Second, it must abandon conspiracy theories — i.e., capitalist conspiracies should be no justification for leftist conspiracies to asrume power, as occurred in Guevara's futile attempt to create a "hundred Vietnams." Instead, the left should demand the exposure of all existing conspiracies, starting with that of Yalta-Postdam, and thereby effect a return to the tradition of open diplomacy.

Corradi, the final panelist, broached the matter of American involvement in Latin America. The U.S., he claimed, has not been able to respond adequately to problems of regional dependent development. Lacking any credible formula, American actions have been raw and clumsy, drifting toward intervention. Corradi sketched three likely consequences: First, a regional war with international consequences; second, the commitment of U.S. troops, but with only the fuzziest idea of what victory would mean;

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and third, the continuation of the existing, bloody status quo. Given the poor prospects of substantial economic or political progress in the region and the conservative conditions in the U.S., the third scenario is most probable for the present. In Central America, there is little movement for reform or democratization, even in Nicaragua. Central American countries will continue to have strong states with hegemonic parties. The best response to these conditions would be policies fostering economic pragmatism and semi-pluralist politics, in a climate of official non-alignment.

The relations between the U.S. and the rest of Latin America are just as shoddy and self-defeating as they are with Central America. For example, the Falklands war between two conservative nations in a conservative era had no point. More generally, conservative values have difficulty translating into a power structure and program. Note the irony that the outcome of the war was the democratization of Argentina. Regardless of any conservative consensus, the different structure of interests within a region is likely to produce conflicts.

Corradi then introduced the provocative thesis that there is no viable economic-political model for Latin America coming from either the left or right or within or without the country. The left theory of dependence and revolution, inherited from the 1960s, has been a disaster. At the same time, democratic movements in South America seem to amount to too little too late. Most significantly, the economics of development have been reduced to crisis meetings on debt management, with financial matters taking precedence over production. In South America, the old imperialism has collapsed, but with consequences far different from those dreamt by Lenin.

From within the left of Latin America, things are no better. Currently the left there is re-examining the relation of theory to practice. The intellectual culture and politics produced in the 1960s is in total disarray. It is a crisis of the left, inasmuch as the left in Latin America had a monopoly on cultural and political innovation during the last 20 years, with all cultural and political issues having been politicized from the left. This resulted, however, in issues being reduced to strong bipolar coding. For instance, leftist intellectuals incorporated most avant-garde political theory from Europe in a sophisticated way, as in the combination of theories of imperialism with Althusserian Marxism, but these did not lead to any political maturity and only resulted in complicated over-simplification.

Corradi's point was that the left's bipolar reductionism helped it dig its own grave in generating the rightist reaction, which sought the total obliteration of the left. While the New Left in Latin America drew inspiration from the worldwide events of '68, its existence was joined with the rigidities of an existing statist system. In some places, like Argentina, the New Left translated its themes into avant-garde terrorism. The existing weak democratic traditions did not cope well and responded to Left extremism not with a debate from a vital center, but a counter right-extremism. A final problem with the New Left awakening was its preoccupation with populism as a heroic force (such as Peronism) when it should have been creating a public discourse on democracy. The '70s witnessed the destruction of the left, along with a fundamentalist liberalism reduced mostly to the economic sphere, with social discipline enforced by the army and terrorism.

A new period is emerging in Latin American politics. There is a new discourse on democracy in response to the earlier period of leftist dichotomization and rightist terrorism. Paradoxically, just as the left was being exterminated, the exterminators were themselves collapsing. As in Argentina, the right crumbled just when it had finished its historical task of liquidating the left. It is in this context that there has been a

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renewed interest in democracy in Latin America. The new intellectual discourse on democracy has become important and differs from the debate in Europe in that the issue is how to transform authoritarianism into limited democracy.

Kovel provided the first comment and began by noting how the individual panelists had shaped their presentations in light of their own biographies. He sharply disagreed with Arato on the matter of unilateral disarmament, and reiterated the importance of the Western peace movement, which generally favors unilateral disarmament. He addressed then the importance of the anti-interventionist movement in the U.S., which he sees as more politically conscious than the anti-war movement of a generation ago. Kovel also spoke with favor of Nicaragua, celebrating the Sandinista revolution as an example of people taking history into their own hands and disagreeing with Feher's remark about the dictatorial character of the Sandinista regime.

Postone's remarks were not so much a comment as they were a full-blown paper on the Soviet threat and recent American policy in Europe. He denied there was any objective Soviet threat and asserted that the U.S. had created an ideological Soviet threat to justify its own hegemony. Specifically, American fears of a politically independent Europe — especially West Germany — led to the propaganda about the Soviet threat, designed to rally Europe behind the U.S. The appropriate response is not disengagement or unilateral disarmament, but the creation of a politically and militarily sovereign Western Europe. This, in turn, has to be linked to democratization, to prevent any potential military takeover. Ultimately, such a move coud lead to the stabilization of relations with the Soviet Union.

In the lively discussion that followed, Lyman argued that deterrence could be separated from nuclear armaments because of the "secret blueprint" for world management and the Soviet need to have Western Europe continue in its present form. Thus, the Soviet threat could logically be deterred by conventional forces while the peace movement could broaden its support by emphasizing the logical de-escalation of the nuclear side of deterrence. But Dick Howard objected that the theme of democracy was not stressed enough with regard to the disarmament issue. Could any politics of deterrence be compatible with democratic society, he asked.

Heller claimed there was no contradiction between radical and pluralist democracy, then went on to attack the weak methodological postures of Kovel and Postone in their uncritical use of purportedly factual evidence. Fred Siegel likewise criticized them — Kovel for his benign portrayal of Nicaragua; Postone for his portrayal of Europe as always being acted upon, never acting for itself and for his claim that Washington is trying to hold on to Western Europe.

Benhabib felt that Postone and Arato had ignored the standpoint of the citizen in the peace movement. Since pacificism is a consequence of universalistic morality, we should take it seriously rather than reject it as a threat to East-West stability.

Closing the discussion were two comments. Michael Bernard suggested that the discussion of foreign policy in Europe was too much based on forms of technology and political economy characteristic of the '70s that do not take account of the advanced technology of the '80s. Europe, he said, can no longer satisfy the Soviet need for either advanced technology or finance capital. Europe will become more dependent on the U.S. and Japan because of this. Someone in the audience then volunteered that Kovel holds a theory of American imperialism in Central America that Corradi had indicated had collapsed some time ago.

The panelists were then given the opportunity to respond to whatever they wished. Arato noted that the day's presentations revealed an open discussion that is difficult to

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find on the left today. He defended Kovel's opening remarks and took them in the spirit of acknowledging pluralism. Still, he asked Kovel what it would take for him to retract some of his assertions about the democratic nature of the Sandinista regime, particularly his claim that it was superior either to American or English democracy. His most serious quarrel with Kovel was on the question of alternative rationality: i.e., politically-substantive rationality only leads to disaster in that the elimination of formal democratic rights in the name of the substantive moral themes of the revolution only leads to undemocratic repression. Formal rationality must coexist with substantive rationality.

Arato disagreed with Postone on a number of counts: Postone underestimated the contribution of the political and the military spheres; exaggerated the economic status of Europe; ignored the important status of the Soviet Union and the importance of the SS-20 as the first weapon of its kind; was too reluctant to consider that a nation so economically weak as the U.S.S.R. could use its military power as a means to gain economic and political dominance. Against Benhabib, he argued that pacifism was no expression of universalistic ideology so much as it was the prerogative of aristocrats or elites.

Feher responded to Kovel and Postone. Again, he took exception to Kovel's characterization of the Sandinistas. And, calling Postone's talk a brilliant presentation of a fragemented logic, Feher rejected the thesis that the Soviet Union was not a threat. He invoked a broad literature documenting Soviet expansionism, and claimed it was illogical for Postone to dismiss such arguments on the basis of unproven ontological assumptions.

Corradi also found Kovel's comments on Nicaragua objectionable, yet put the issue differently, saying the matter was one of political judgment: our endorsement of a particular political position should be separated from an uncritical assessment of the holistic position. Corradi stated that he supports the Nicaraguan revolution against attempts to destabilize the regime, but this does not mean that he buys Sandinista ideology, which he said was not substantively democratic.

Kovel and Postone concluded with a defense of their views that had come under such harsh criticism. Kovel repeated that the contradictoins of an imperialistic society have important political consequences for transformative social movements. He defended both Nicaragua and the American anti-interventionist movement as democratic. Postone asserted that many had misinterpreted his comments. His point was simply to try to emphasize one aspect of the situation that had not yet been central in debates: the recent change in power relations between American and Western Europe.

The final panel of the conference was on the collapse of socialism and of liberal reformism. Panelists were Fred Siegel and Dick Howard. Adolph Reed was the commentator.

Siegel opened with a crowd-pleasing performance laced with anecdotes and jokes. He argued that the '84 presidential election demonstrated the final collapse of an already deteriorating Democratic Party liberalism. The failure of the Democrats to capture the White House more than twice in the last 20 years is only a reflection of broader trends. His point was that the Democrats had essentially lost their constituency over the years as is evident in all voting trend studies. This, he claimed, was because the public had lost trust and confidence in their statist ideology, although this didn't mean a loss of confidence in every component of its programmatic agenda.

The Democratic Party undermined its stock of public trust because it strayed from

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its earlier roots as a popular based movement. The explanation, Siegel said, was the party's movement to a technical-rational politics administered by the new class through the state apparatus. The new politics was based on universal principles derived from social scientific, academic, and judicial knowledge that was imposed on a population that did not want those rules. Spurred by fears left over from the 1950s, that the masses were essentially irrational, and coupled with new fears or doubts that equality for blacks could not be reconciled with principles of majority rule, liberals altered their traditional relation to their constituencies. Specifically, they abandoned a public politics of persuasion in favor of priestly rule by the judiciary and the experts in the name of enforced fairness.

If the Democrats rejected the democratic inclusion of the working class through the negative metaphor of Archie Bunker, then the working class and other constituencies were rejecting the Democrats because of their stand on race. First, the Democrats failed their minority constituency because they did not confront or solve the economic issues of unemployment, ghetto-ization, and the urban fiscal crisis, and essentially abandoned minorities to welfare dependency. Second, the Democrats linked the question of race to government through affirmative action measures, such as quotas. Jimmy Carter was particularly culpable, emphasizing symbolic issues such as racial quotas over programs for full employment or the rebuilding of the cities.

In other areas, too, the party undermined its popular base, embracing state intervention into individual or cultural affairs. Dating from the New Deal, Democratic policy-makers increasingly exchanged their earlier view of the state as a vehicle for freeing people from economic oppression for a more encompassing "cultural Keynesianism" in which the state functions as a "battering ram by which the individual could be freed from the tyrannies of social conventions." The Democrats used the authority of the state to replace traditionally inegalitarian relations of family, church and community with a state-sponsored civic equality. By opting to realize civic equality through administrative and judicial means rather than persuasion, the party expressed its disdain for the "great unwashed," who reciprocated in kind by rebelling against the arbitrary intervention of state power into everyday life.

The final nail in the Democratic Party's coffin, Siegel contended, is exemplified by the rise of neo-liberalism within its own ranks. The backlash against Goldwater and the new right drove economically conservative but socially liberal Republicans out of the GOP and created a cohort of upscale, "silk-stocking" Democrats whose style further alienated the party's traditional constituency. In short, the Democratic Party, since the 1960s, has done itself in.

Howard spoke on the status of socialism in France. The socialists came to power for two reasons, both of which have now evaporated. First, there was a common program with a broad-based left, including the communists. This coalition has crumbled now. Then there was the dual program of economic socialism and political liberalism. Always vague in content, it has become completely contradictory. Initially, this strategy allowed the socialists to capture the liberal vote, but now the liberals are defecting, too.

The main difficulty for the socialists, argued Howard, was holding together their program of liberalism in the face of economic recalcitrance. When they came to power, they began to rapidly implement their program: nationalization of key industries, reduced work week with no cut in pay, expansionof vacation to five weeks, increased social benefits. The consequences of such policies in the 1980s were predictable: wage freezes, the continual devaluation of the franc, and other austerity measures. As

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economic imperatives and constraints came to dominate political debate, socialists began losing electoral support.

The problem now facing French socialists is translating their politics of austerity into one capable of mobilizing opinion and allegiance in the relative absence of the old socialist plan. The contradiction is that this politics means attacking entrenched positions, such as entitlements, which are then popularly defended on the basis of acquired rights. In essence, the socialists have been forced to attack the very basis of their own liberal legitimation. The result is a political dilemma for which there seem to be two political solutions. First, the threat from the right is capitalized as an excuse not to engage in reform. Or, second, the threat from the right could serve Mitterrand by driving a wedge between the center right and the hard right. If the latter, the result might be to transform the socialist party into a popular party with a center constituency.

Howard discussed the broader political consequences of the state of affairs in France in terms of the reactions of three political groups. First, the more traditional Marxian critique of Mitterrand's socialism is to write off the recent years as yet another illustration of socialists doing the capitalists' dirty work. The working class is again made the victim of politicians who prefer power to principle and who manipulate workers with moral rhetoric while subjecting them to neo-conservative austerity measures. Second, the socialist party's own internal Marxists — the so-called left wing — seeks a return to the original precepts of the election platform and the abandonment of the austerity-oriented market approach. In this context, Howard pointed out a severe dilemma for the French socialists: the ideology that once served them in the conquering of power becomes irrelevant and is undermined by the realities of power. The general result has been economic chaos and austerity measures that have undermined the socialists' electoral party while leading to new political polarizations. In this sense, the party's left-wing has little to offer to revitalize the party. The broader reality of the social changes accompanying French modernizations is the political impossibility of simultaneously appealing to traditional socialist principles and securing the consumer-corporatist citizen orientation of the French people.

The third and final group Howard discussed was the new "second left," which draws from '60s New Left themes in their response to the French political crisis. While not a coherent doctrine in any sense, some of their ideas include the destruction of the legacy of corporatist privilege and the institution of the socialist principle of self-management. Further, some current socialist strategies like job-sharing and the reduction of the work week are interpreted differently from the viewpoint that work is no longer definitional of character nor is work itself a social good. Unemployment is addressed as an issue of the quality and character of jobs rather than merely quantitative provisioning. The basic question here is whether such themes can be made politically feasible.

Reed directed his comments at Siegel, sharply disagreeing with him on the meaning of the collapse of Democratic liberalism. One flaw in Siegel's argument regarded the historical development of an elite administrative politics that was not merely a product of the '60s. The administrative model of state politics had been the basis of the Democratic coalition since FDR. In fact, the prominence of social engineering elites has been characteristic of both parties since the rise of Progressivism at the turn of the century. Archie Bunker was never considered fit to rule in the class coalition of corporate and professional elites. Curiously, the role of the corporate class was never considered in Siegel's analysis. What was different about the '60s was that the new claimant groups

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demanded incorporation into the coalition's "popular" base, i.e., demanded to be included in the array of interest groupings that policy-making elites recognized as important constituencies. More than a new anti-Democratic bureaucratization, the changes in Democratic politics beginning in the '60s was a response to assaults by previously excluded groups against concentrations of privilege that had been built in large measure through the judicial and administrative apparatus of the state (e.g., urban renewal, FHA, suburbanization, civil service, seniority systems, etc.).

Moreover, Reed faulted Siegel's interpretation for its familiar and regressive view of government. The contraposition of the "politics of persuasion" and "state-sponsored civic equality" recycles the rhetoric of James Kilpatrick and other rationalizers of "massive resistance" to civil rights in the '50s and '60s. The same point applies to Siegel's debasement of the principle of democracy to "majority rule" — a proposition whose speciousness is clear to racial minorities and others who suffer the "tyrannies of social conventions." Reed asked Siegel: if the state (which cannot in any case be neutral) is not engaged in the struggle against "traditionally inegalitarian relations of family, church and community," understood as cultural privilege, then how are those inequalities to be fought?

Reed also could not accept Siegel's thesis that affirmative action and racial quotas were centrally responsible for defections from party ranks. Even if it is true that liberalism has suffered by being too closely linked with the interests of excluded groups, what is the political alternative? Are we to abandon concern for such groups? Reed said Siegel's account was leading up to exhorting the Democrats to return to their old base. This, he said, combined with the perspective that would delegitimate the claims of the beneficiaries of "cultural Keynesianism," suggests an agenda that has more in common with the *Commentary* crowd than with any left vision of social emancipation or egalitarian democracy.

And so the conference closed on a level of conflict as high as that on which it had opened. None of the differences that had prompted its planning had been resolved, but this may have had something to do with an unintended change in the character of the conference. Originally seen as an "internal" affair meant to allow *Telos* editors to vent their own and confront one another's positions, it developed otherwise. Word of it leaked out to certain circles of the New York intellectual community. As a result, a large number of people having nothing to do with the editorial board came to the sessions. Their presence turned dialogues into formal presentations geared to consumption by regular audiences. Consequently, the conference became a public event, leaving relatively little room for the sort of internal debate that had initially been envisioned. While as a public conference it turned out to be first-rate and extremely stimulating, it did not foster the kind of internal debate that had been sought. That, apparently, will have to await another occasion.

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THE END OF KEYNESIANISM*

by Daniel Cohen

1.

Are Keynesian policies doomed? The experience of both Chirac and Mauroy might make one think so. Yet too severe a judgment would overlook an important counter-example: the actual economic recovery in the United States. As happened under the Kennedy-Johnson administration 20 years ago, the United States is experiencing a recovery that follows the textbook precepts of Keynesianism: an increase in military spending and a decrease in taxes, all of which is accompanied by (as predicted by the theory) an increase in the interest rate and the deficit. Yet, the 20-year gap that separates these two prime examples of American Keynesianism reveals an essential difference. At the beginning of the 1960s, Keynesianism was the dominant theory to which the Democratic administration referred. Now, in the mid-1980s, Keynesian theory is hidden. Evoked nostalgically by those whom it fails, ignored where it succeeds, the economic recovery in the guise of a budget deficit has vanished from the realm of the public imagination.

This development is not a fleeting moment sandwiched between two historical periods. As both yardstick and proof, we will take the considerable renewal of economic theory over the course of the last 15 years. Born of a controversy between Keynesians and monetarists over the role of monetary policy, a new movement (the neo-classical school) has emerged, which today reigns nearly supreme over Anglo-Saxon economists. Beyond the controversy over the impact of monetary or budgetary policy itself, it has given rise to exciting consideration of the place of the State in economic theory.[1] We propose to follow some of the stages of this thinking. We will look at the neo-classical school's critique of the Keynesian state, then we will show what roads remain open for rethinking economic policy. We conclude with a few remarks on the contrast between the right and the left.

2.

No matter how big it is or what it does, the State is subject to the same accounting as is the private sector. It takes in revenues (fiscal receipts), it takes on spending (highway construction, bureaucrats' salaries) and produces a debt — which is the difference between them. The nature of this debt is a primary object of controversy in the theory. Insofar as it encompasses currency, the debt has the force of legal tender. Can the State free itself from debt by incurring a debt? Neither the Keynesians nor the monetarists accept this position. The Treasury can only create that amount of revenue for the State concurrent with the agents' monetary transaction needs: this right is limited in real value and, in the last analysis, can be analyzed as a particular form of the tax system. As to the remainder of the public debt (Treasury bonds, government loans), there is no

*Translated by Margaret Rubin from *Esprit,* December 1984.

1. The economic theory that we refer to will be the dominant theory of the subject of either Keynesianism or post-monetarism. For a critique of these theories, see note 2 on Keynesianism and also S. de Brunhoff, "Questioning Monetarism," *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, September 1982.

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mystery: it gives rise to interest payments which, in turn, have to be counted as new expenditures.

For the classical authors (Adam Smith and David Ricardo), strict accounting of these three terms (expenditures, receipts, debt) exhausts all discourse on the State. What the State spends is as much as subtracted from the expenditures of the private sector and, in any event, would be deducted from its wealth. There are numerous ways of making this deduction. If the State immediately raises taxes, the deduction will be instantaneous. If the State increases the public debt, one of two things will occur. For instance, either the repayment on the debt will be made by a later deduction from tax revenues; except for the interest paid on the debt the deduction of wealth will be the same in actualized value as the immediate increase in taxation. Or the repayment of the debt will be financed by currency creation, and the inflation that results from this will devalue the wealth of those who are the keepers of the public debt. In either case, the effect is the same on the ensuing redistribution and on the financing of the increase in government expenditures. Returned to their financial transparency, the dealings of the State are subjected in this way to a budgetary constraint that can no longer be distinguished from that of the private sector: in the end, the State must earn what it spends. By the political power invested in it, the State can transfer wealth from one sector of the population to another, but it cannot create it. Ricardo's principles of political economy rest on just this no-win situation between the State and the private sector. Until the advent of Keynesian theory, these principles made up the impenetrable horizon of economic theory.

3.

How does Keynes invalidate Ricardian theorems? By starting from a fact of experience: the possibility of unemployment. History reveals (violently enough during the period when Keynes is writing) that markets (the labor market in particular) can lack the function assigned them by the theory: that of finding the equilibrium price at which no agent would wish either to sell more or to buy additional quantities. If unemployment is possible, the ideal-type economic theory is unworkable and everything can be reconsidered.

Let us go over a bit of the underlying reasoning in the *General Theory* before commenting on the Keynesian reappraisal. If prices cannot accomplish the role assigned them by the theory, the quantities exchanged on the markets will have to be rationed. It will not be possible either to sell or to buy all that one wants at the market price (nor will it, of course, be possible to sell the full amount of labor that one wishes to sell at current wages). The State can play an active role in such an economy, where the amounts exchanged (and not prices) carry the weight of the adjustment. For example, in creating currency the State can permit agents to augment their spending and firms to hire in response to this additional demand. In such a context, economic policy can avoid Ricardian accounting, which took the wealth of the nation as a given; at present, under the Keynesian model, production responds to promptings from the State and to additional wealth born of a State deficit (currency creation in our example).

One may deem it necessary to either accept or reject the Keynesian hypothesis in view of empirical reality: do firms have a production capacity at their disposal that allows them to react to fluctuations in demand? Keynes' originality, however, does not depend on the answer to this question, but on the introduction into the theory itself of an empirical type of hypothesis (the non-adjustment of prices).[2] Indeed, Keynes does

2. This presentation of Keynesianism, rebaptized as the theory of disequilibrium, is dominant today. See Benassy, "Fondements microéconomiques de la macroéconomie," *Revue éco-*

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not alter the role of prices in order to account for unemployment. He upholds the ideal-type of the classics but impedes its realization within the theory in the name of experience. His contemporaries were amazed: a new field was born, macroeconomics.

During the 30 years that followed the publication of *General Theory*, Keynesianism has become the impenetrable horizon of both economc theory and governments — a glorious and well-known adventure on which it is useless to comment further.

4.

During the last 15 years, as Keynesianism was, with increasing frequency, failing in its mission to stabilize the economy, a slow deconstruction of Keynesian theory was begun by the neo-classical school. Basically its economic policy recommendations followed the precepts of Milton Friedman's monetarism. (The intellectual leader of this new school — sometimes known as the Rational Expectations or Rational Anticipations School — is Robert Lucas, who occupies Friedman's chair in Chicago.) But it doesn't always follow monetarist policies: at the level of method, Friedman's monetarism did little to distinguish itself from Keynesianism; he made a cocktail of theoretical hypotheses and empirical constants (in the case of monetarism it is the stability of currency demand, which is placed at the center of the Friedmanian construction). In contrast to this, the Rational Expectations School attacks the principle of this heterogeneous mixture and deconstructs macroeconomics by setting down that all hypotheses must be founded in theory and by theory. From the example of monetary policy (essential to the genesis of this movement), we will show how the State has found its role abolished, and how Ricardian principles have been returned to their rightful place.

5.

Everything begins in December of 1967: Milton Friedman is elected president of the American Economics Association at a time when a great debate has begun on the timeliness of loosening American monetary policy. (As today, the rise in interest rates threatened to halt growth.) Seated in his new presidential armchair, Friedman asks the Keynesians: what argument allows you to assert that a change in monetary policy will have a positive impact on economic activity? Why would entrepreneurs, who did not find it profitable to hire and to increase their production before the loosening of monetary policy, determine that it would be profitable to do so after the head of the Central Bank has decided to print one hundred dollars of additional paper money? Is it not reasonable to suppose that instead of creating employment, the announcement of this currency creation will lead rational entrepreneurs to increase their selling price, thus cancelling the effect of the currency creation through inflation and, except for this inconvenience stabilizing the economy where it started?

In other words, if you accept the hypothesis that the economy behaves rationally, why won't loosening monetary policy be purely and simply inflationary? (One can see why the debate over monetary policy is so fundamental: it lies upstream from all explicit description of the schemas of rationality of the economy.) Today, the debate over American economic policy is formulated in nearly the same words. The

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nomique, March 1976; and E. Malinvaud, *Réexamen de la théorie du chômages* (Calmann-Levy). Yet it does not do justice to more heterodox works — for example, Minsky, *John Maynard Keynes* (Columbia University). Also see Robert Boyer, "The Influence of Keynes on French Economic Policy: Past and Present," *Cepremap*, 8404, for an analysis of Keynes' influence in France.

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Keynesians say: loosen monetary policy and bring down interest rates; the monetarists respond: you will gain nothing but inflation. Lucas sets out the problem in these terms: no one expects any economic effect from a monetary reform that consists in converting one hundred old francs into one new one. How, asks Lucas, does currency creation declared ex nihilo by the Central Bank differ from currency reform? In only one way: currency reform is an instruction, the intelligibility of which is immediate. In declaring one hundred old dollars into one new one. How, asks Lucas, does currency creation no economic content. A pure currency creation (that is to say, a creation that will not be accompanied by the effects of redistribution) ought to obey the same logic. If, instead of using a hundred francs to settle their transactions, the agents use a thousand francs, the prices will be multiplied by ten, but still they will be obliged to return to the original situation, according to the theory (according to any theory, argues Lucas). If this does not follow, it is solely because currency creation does not have the obviousness of currency reform. It is not immediately comprehensible and only produces its effects with time. Only the "illusion" of additional wealth (all the agents having the impression at the same time of earning more money) will create economic effects.

At this stage of the argument, the controversy between the Keynesians and the (post-) monetarists has not really begun. It is at the next stage that the conflict opens up. The Keynesians say: it is true that only currency illusion takes account of the effectiveness of monetary policy. But the examples are legion to prove that this illusion has been effective. Deceptive though it may be, the monetary illusion can allow for an effective monetary policy. The neo-classical school does not deny that monetary illusion is possible and that it has been observed in the past, but it denies that it can be torn from its historical context so as to be lodged in theory. One can observe that monetary illusion has been active (because the agents were taken by "surprise"), but, given Friedman's reasons, this retrospective effect cannot be transformed into an economic policy recommendation: such a recommendation "warns" agents and carries the germs of its failure. In other words, the Keynesian theorist who directs his advice to the Central Bank operates outside of the theory. He thinks of the economy, but does not think of his own position within it. If he did, he would have to admit that his advice on economic policy is part of the theoretical field of economic agents who could not help but integrate it into their calculations and thus elude his projects (in responding to the currency creation with an increase in prices). In this way, the neo-classical school claims that Keynesianism can be correct with regard to the facts but that it cannot be thought of as a theory. And if it cannot be thought of as theory, how can a democratic regime, which announces its decisions by a debate accessible to the public, make use of it?

Let us end this illustration of the theoretical reform taken on by the neo-classical school here. One can already size up the conceptual upheaval that it has put the theory through. Today, economists continue to group themselves as Keynesians and (post-) monetarists (and the recent examples — Chirac, Mauroy, Reagan — do not seem to be in a position to decide between them). Today, however, Keynesians have to lodge their teaching within the criterion of rationality defined by the neo-classicists. (They have to show, for example, that it is rational for agents to announce their prices beforehand contractually[3] so that forseen monetary policy will thereby have effects on the economy.)

3. Contract theory has developed considerably over the course of the last several years. It seems to be the means by which the Keynesians seek to respond to the neo-classical school (adopting its criterion of rationality). The agents of the private sector will often find that it is optimal to

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6.

It is tempting to fear for the failure of the left in terms inspired by the analysis of the preceding paragraph: the coming to power of the left warned the economic actors (noisily enough) of a change of economic policy. If the economic actors anticipate that the new government will not increase supply (that is to say, production), they will be driven equally to foresee: (a) additional inflation; (b) a foreign trade deficit; (c) a stop to the policy of growth due to (a) and (b); and, finally, (d) that it is not necessary to hire and to increase supply because the recovery will be brief at best; so that (a), (b), (c) come to be realized in (d). But the opposition will be able to claim with authority that by using the same argument, one can predict the very opposite scenario: (a'), (b'), (c'), (d'). Formulated in these terms, the debate over economic policy is fairly despairing: it is at best indeterminate, at worst useless.

Yet there were years of effective economic policy: witness the glorious years of Keynesianism that followed World War II. How is that success to be interpreted in light of the questions posed by the neo-classical school? Must it be admitted that from 1948 to 1968 acted according to rules that were never foreseen by the private sector and that government policy constantly defied rationality? This thesis is certainly not defensible given the length of the period considered. There is no doubt, however, that in declaring void all that is unforeseen the State can stabilize the economy in its evolution by something unexpected in another sense — in compensating, for example, for a lag in private investments by additional public investment — the State can act in a way that considerably reduces fluctuations in the economy.[4] Analyzed in this way, these state actions are as unforeseeable as the movements whose apearance they avert. They make it possible to reconcile the criterion of unforeseeability that the Rational Expectations School would impose on it with the retrospective report of the stabilization that they carried out. Let us call K a state whose actions answer to this logic of espousing the fluctuations of decisions of the private sector in a void. Does post-war economic policy obey the logic of K? Undoubtedly, it does in part, though certainly not globally: by construction, the actions of K must compensate themselves on the average and must not show any regular tendency at all. The main characteristic of economic policy during this period was quite different. It belonged to a type basically very different from K: that which is commonly called the welfare state, which we will term P. We will show that State P is not a variant of State K, and that its rationality can be inscribed within the criteria set down by the Rational Expectationists.

7.

State P presents itself as a societywide insurance company. It contains two main ledgers: insurance against unemployment, and Social Security. We will comment here on one of the most exemplary forms of the problem that occupies us: the right to retirement.

The state offers a right to retirement to each generation of active members. This right is acquired by workers' contributions during their period of activity and workers draw

sign contracts among themselves in order to protect themselves against price fluctuations. In so doing, they give the economy a Keynesian shape where prices no longer function in accordance with the ideal of the classics. See both Grossman and Hart, "Implicit Contract, Moral Hazard and Unemployment," *American Economic Review*, May 1981; and J. Taylor, "Aggregate Dynamics and Staggered Contracts," *Journal of Political Economy,* February 1980. In the interest of our narrower focus, we will not comment on the implications of these theories for economic policy.

4. See Franco Modigliani, "The Rational Expectation Hypothesis or Should We Forsake Stabilization Policies?" *American Economic Review*, March 1977.

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on it during their period of inactivity. How can a private insurance company guarantee the right of retirement to its insurees? By placing the savings it collects from its members on the financial markets, a private company can return their initial contributions to them augmented by the interest drawn from its investments. The State can do no worse when it occupies this position; it always has the possibility to invest social contributions in the financial markets. In certain circumstances, however, it can do better. Let us look at some formal chronological landmarks. In 1950, the State collected the contributions from active workers who would claim their right to retirement in 1980. In 1950, certain idle generations claimed payment of the rights they acquired in 1920. The State can invest the contributions of 1950 on the financial markets, as we said, and wait until 1980 to pay them back to the workers. It can also distribute to the retirees of 1950 the contributions of those active in 1950 with the idea of paying to the idle of 1980 the incoming take of the contributions of the actives of 1980. If the rate of economic growth between 1950 and 1980 is greater than the profitability offered on the private financial markets (and it has been), this strategy prevails over the practice that private insurers are restricted to: the State offers its insured a remuneration stronger than that of the private markets. Let us stress this distinction. Why can the private insurance companies not do the same? Can they not also pay back to their insured the contributions of the active workers and wait until new generations come to refloat their funds? If a private insurance company had a monopoly on pensions, it certainly could do this. In a competitive system, a private company, if it did this, would always leave itself open to the risk that the new classes of active workers would be wary of a deficit society (it has already paid the contributions of the active members of 1980 to the retirees of 1980) and will turn to another private company, putting the first into insolvency. The State avoids such a possibility: it does not risk bankruptcy since it always has the recourse of raising taxes; not inspiring fear, it does not have, for the moment, the need to protect itself.

This model of State P is therefore generous and rational. Let us return to its mechanism in order to see how it typifies the way to deal with the State according to the criticism of the Rational Expectationists. As indicated in the preceding paragraph, one of the most important points of the criticism of this school is to separate the State from the illusions of the spontaneous creation of wealth in order to return it to the frontiers of Ricardian rigor. This rested on the principle that the State must earn what it spends, and that for a given amount of expenditures there is an equivalence between the different means of financing them: immediate or delayed taxation. This equivalence rested on the idea that rational agents ought to expect that the expenditures taken on by the State, even if they do not give rise to an immediate fiscal deduction, will be subject to it sooner or later. Implicit in the demonstration of Ricardian equivalence is the view that the State and the private sector share the same economic horizon. If, at one time, the State reports the deduction in taxation, the result will be the same for the agents — provided, of course, that they act the same. Now the model that we commented on in the example of the right to retirement[5] breaks this equivalence by opposing the private sector, for which the temporal horizon is infinite. It is no longer neutral to carry over at one time the deduction of taxation since the burden is carried over from one generation to the next. Does such action, carrying over the weight of the tax system to our

5. This model appears originally in Samuelson in 1958. It was exhumed by some authors of the neo-classical school in order to forge a positive theory of the State. See Barro, "Are Government Bonds New Wealth?" *Journal of Political Economy*, August 1974; and Kareken and Wallace, eds., *Models of Monetary Economics,* Federal Reserve Board of Minneapolis.

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children, prove egoism right? Not always. As we saw with the hypothesis that the yield of the financial markets is smaller than the rate of economic growth, all the generations can take advantage of the way the State manages the pension funds. The perenniality of the State (as well as the guarantees of solvency that endow it with fiscal power) gives to its long-term arbitrations a greater effectiveness than that to which the private sector has access.

This immortality of the State poses, however, major problems, to which we now turn.

8.

The State is incarnated in a succession of governments with life spans usually far shorter than those of the private sector. How does the State's principle of perenniality reconcile itself with the always ephemeral form of its conditions of existence? This question is crucial and poses new problems which are the subject of an increasingly abundant literature. It poses the problem of the incentives for a government to honor the commitments made by preceding governments. For example, the socialist government of France today has to honor the commitments made by the Gauillist State during the 1960s: in their day, the governments of the Fifth Republic granted numerous benefits destined to preserve social peace, payment of which had once been postponed (in conformity with our theory of State P). Today, when the crisis is greatest, these commitments must be honored, even though the government wishes to have its hands free in order to make new alliances and to grant other benefits. Let us note first of all that the State does not refrain from renouncing (at least partially) its prior commitments. All inflation, for example, is destruction of liabilities. In inflation-ridden Latin America, each new government systematically destroys the commitments of each of its predecessors. In a country like France, this challenge is far more moderate.

But what benefit is there in continuing to pay the old debt (instead of diluting it in inflation)? The benefit is the following: in renouncing its debt, a government prohibits itself from incurring a new one later. Who will retain confidence in a State that has cancelled its prior commitments? In the context of State P, for example, a government may want to break the chain that commits one generation to pay out its resources to another. In doing so, when the time comes, today's beneficiary generation exposes itself to the risk of suffering the same treatment later on. These simple remarks make it possible to delimit the problem of the "reputation" of governments.

Consider another example. Economic theory loathes unearned benefits (*rentes de situation*). They are at best useless and at worst they divert resources that could be better spent. Take the case of patents. It is inefficient to pay a commission to the inventor of a new technology: once the technology has been invented, its cost to society is nil (the inventor does not do anything more), and his remuneration ought to be nil as well. Not to remunerate inventions is thus not troubling with regard to those already made. It is troubling for those that are to come. In such a case, the ideal for economic policy would be to be able: (1) to abolish all already existing patents: (2) to commit oneself to not touching those which will be submitted in the future. As soon as new patents have arisen, however, it ill be optimal once again to promise (1) and (2).

The logic of this reasoning is fundamental and applies to many contexts.[6] Take the

6. These questions were first raised by Kydland and Prescott, "Rules Rather Than Discretion," *Journal of Political Economy*, 1977, which showed that the form (1) + (2) was quite often the optimal policy for a government.

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example of both investments and capital. Like the patents already registered, capital (factories, machines) already installed could, in theory, be totally taxed (expropriated) without any resulting inconvenience for the economy. Once the capital is physically installed, there is nothing that can make it disappear (as with inventions already discovered). On the other hand, total expropriation of capital would quash all inducement to future investment so that the ideal of economic policy would present itself again under the form already noted for patents. As can be seen, this sequence has a very general scope and applies in fact to all unearned benefits. It can be optimal, initially, to accord a royalty to an agent of the private sector (to incite him to invest, to invent, etc.); it is equally optimal to do away with the acquired benefits once they have produced their effects. The only inconvenience is the loss of "reputation" of the government that does this.

How does this conflicting function of governments resolve itself in economic history? In the first place, numerous institutions such as the gold standard or systems of fixed exchanges have had as their mission the task of limiting the power of the state (the power to dilute its debts in inflation in this example). As far as the comprehension of these balances with "reputation," mechanisms of the gold standard were murky enough in theory: why would the State commit itself in advance to respect certain criteria? Is it not possible to specify optimal action on a case-by-case basis? The answer is no: the State has to be bound by certain rules if it does not want to discourage particular actions by the private sector.

Moreover, as far as the risk of expropriation of capital by the State is concerned, it may be noted that, according to Wallerstein, the parcellization of the world economy into nation states was in answer to this problem.[7] According to Wallerstein, capitalists protect themselves against the risks of expropriation by threatening to invest abroad should the national government that houses them yield to the temptation to expropriate them. The parcellization of the world economy into nation states has played, thereby, a crucial role that we can interpret in terms of our preceding examples. It makes it possible to give a price to the "reputation" of governments, with the capitalists investing wherever it is best.

Let us give a final example. In France, the two conflicting aspects of State management (to abolish pensions and to promise never to do so again) are typically regulated by the "alternation" between the right and the left. The right governs over the long-term, over the smooth times of "laissez-faire"; the left is called on for brief periods: it cancels the royalty payments that have become useless; it corrects the inequalities of remuneration born of laissez-faire until they become politically unbearable;[8] then it is returned, in its turn, to the wings and the running of business can take over (note that the right has never repealed reforms that the left has introduced).

The crisis pervading the French left can be analyzed in light of this conflicting role of governments. It has accomplished (by the reforms of 1981-82) its usual end, but today it is trying to shed the role which allows it to come to power only every 20 or 30 years. No one can reproach it for this, of course, but it is possible to note the following difficulties: either the left will no longer distinguish itself from the right, in which case

7. See, for example, his article in *La crise, quelle crise?* (Maspéro, Paris). Wallerstein underlines the importance of the role played by the parcellization of the world economy for the genesis of capitalism. This aspect of things of course continues to play an important role in what is today called "external constraint."

8. In the example of 1981, one can interpret the unilateral increase in salaries as a partial expropriation of capital; the nationalizations that were paid for at stock market value do not exactly form part of this context.

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great disorder will threaten France (whose job will it be to regulate the conflict between the two functions of the State?); or the left intends to remain the left and to retain its capacity to settle the conflict, in which case the road that will permit it to govern equally during long phases is a narrow one. This is, of course, an immense debate. Analyzed in our terms, it is approachable via the following perspectives. The left's problem is to give guarantees of rigor for the immediate future and, at the same time, to retain its job of restraining the conflict born of the ungodly increase in unearned royalty payments. Following the example of the answers given by economic history, we can propose (a) institutional reforms that warn of the power of the State in the management of its current affairs (cf. the gold standard in the preceding discussion); (b) as many real brakes as allow it to protect its "reputation" and limit its power to the functions K and P; (c) a political sensibility maintained outside of current affairs, which leaves its second task possible during crisis periods, but which is retained, on this side of the threshold, by (a).

The worst, of course, would be that the reverse happens: a political demobilization accompanied by a hold over current management by the pressures of everyday affairs..

9.

The need to rethink the role of the theoretician (or, just as important, that of the politician) in economic theory led us to rationalize economic policy under two perspectives: an incalculable day-to-day management (State K) or an intergenerational management of revenues (State P). This breakdown posed the problem of the "reputation" of governments that embody the State. We have tried to show the rationality of having the choice between "good" and "bad" governments, and the difficulty for the left of avoiding the confinement of this last role.

REDEMPTIVE AND DEMOCRATIC PARADIGMS IN RADICAL POLITICS

by Ferenc Feher

Two methodological remarks are needed at the outset. First, while I am going to treat the *redemptive* paradigm in full, I will — for obvious reasons of length — analyze the *democratic* paradigm only insofar as it is related to the alternative under discussion. Second, under the heading of "redemptive paradigm in radical politics," I will address both left and right political theories. It is, however, only to the degree that conservatives embrace the redemptive paradigm that I speak of "conservative political radicalism."

Redemptive politics was born at the end of the 18th century. It entered the *theater mundi* in the person of the hero whom Hegel appropriately called *Weltgeist zu Pferde* and on whom Weber modeled his principle of "charismatic legitimation." It is a historical paradox — yet an undeniable fact — that the eminently prosaic, even harshly cynical Bonaparte, who despised *idéologues* and who deeply suspected the incorruptible ideological politics, became the Redeemer for his age and generations to come. Two

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sociological factors prepared the ground for and contributed the substance of the sudden rise of the redemptive paradigm. The first, narrower factor was the much-analyzed circumstance in which the victorious bourgeoisie, recently emancipated both from its aristocratic and Jacobin enemies, proved incapable of governing in five years of lackluster political rule. The accumulated social contradictions cried out for a Redeemer, and the age found it in the person of the paternalist lawgiver. The preemptory absolute prince was at the same time extremely indulgent of bourgeois greed and ambition, and grew into a mythological god in a series of dazzling battlefield victories. Since Napoleon, the essence of the redemptive paradigm is that, although the result of tacit consent by collective forces, it invariably becomes *personified* and *populist*. Indeed, under the Emperor's rule, everyone carried the proverbial Marshal's baton in his bag. Finally, this apparently simple solution, which initially seemed so irresistible and rational, turned out to consist of utter irrationality in each and every instance.

The second, broader sociological factor was *the incomplete secularization of modern society*. This, taken with the first factor, can provide an adequate account of the main features of the redemptive paradigm, which thereby shows itself to be more than a mere personal approach to political affairs and instead, becomes a genuine paradigm and a competitor of the two other central political paradigms of modernity: the liberal and the radical-democratic.

This account of the redemptive paradigm has, then, three components. The first can be called, following Luhmann, an *overreduction of the inherent complexity of modernity*. The collisions within a complex network of social subsystems and regulations that emerge at almost each and every historical juncture are apparently resolved through a simple medium — namely, the authority of the redeemer, who, of course, claims a supreme rationality. But the authority is irrational, first, because it does not rest on the conservative rationality of traditions but always emerges from the debris of a smashed traditional authority; and second, because it contradicts the project of Enlightenment by placing its authority beyond question.

The second component is a constantly renewed attempt (successful or unsuccessful) at the *homogenization* of the intrinsic heterogeneity of complex modernity. For more than two centuries, redeemers have resolutely opposed the particularistic existence of groups and units (except corporativist social hierarchy), individual autonomy and political pluralism. Subjecting civil society to a homogenizing political state has, to a lesser or greater extent, always been the hallmark of the redemptive paradigm, both in its successful and unsuccessful versions.

The third characteristic of the redemptive paradigm is that, unlike the liberal or the radical-democratic paradigm, it does not entail a set of rationally predictable institutions. Redemptive institutions vary from one redeemer to the next. Such institutions as exist are derived from the personality, strategy, or the mere whim of the redeemer. This circumstance, which should be distinguished from psychological fact, underscores the *personified* character of the redemptive paradigm.

Finally, the often-repeated appraisal of the redemptive paradigm — that it is religious or pseudo-religious — stems precisely from the broad sociological factor, namely, modernization qua incomplete secularization. Whereas liberalism's "scientific spirit" fails to satisfy certain needs emerging from an incomplete secularization and whereas the radical democratic paradigm has no ethical theory and practice to replace the cohesive force of traditional religion, the redemptive paradigm provides a substitute for religious cohesion in society.

While the redemptive paradigm died at Waterloo, its revival, both on the right and

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left, came on the eve and in the immediate aftermath of World War I. Weber's "Politics as Vocation" was the first emphatic warning about this rising phenomenon and its implicit dangers. The text, an undergraduate classic, has become too well-known to be reinterpreted from yet another angle. Nonetheless, it should be reconsidered for this less-known reason: In elaborating the key concept of "the politics of ultimate ends," Weber had directly in mind Georg Lukács, his young and unpredictable friend who was then experimenting with developing a "metaphysical foundation" for Russian revolutionary terrorism and completing a turn to communism. This fact perhaps reveals the deeper implications of Weber's warning. However, while Weber perceived the danger and could describe the pertinent attitudes, he was apparently unaware of the deeper cause of the new threat. Moreover, Weber's solution rested on the methodological self-delusion of a value-free social science that has subsequently revealed its inadequacy.

We must turn to another representative sociologist, Karl Mannheim, to find, in the person of the celebrated "free-floating intellectual," the *social agent* who resurrects the redemptive paradigm. By the *fin de siècle*, the intelligentsia had a new social status and an adequate novel consciousness. This consciousness predisposed the intelligentsia to revive the redemptive paradigm and, furthermore, to provide it with a *theoretical formulation* — a task that had not been undertaken when the phenomenon first appeared. In this sense, it is possible to say, without engaging in any new kind of demonology, that the free-floating intellectuals were profoundly responsible for corrupting social movements with their redemptive paradigm of politics.

What made the free-floating intellectuals the natural bearers of the redemptive paradigm was the dual nature of their emancipation. On the one hand, the avant-gardist intelligentsia was no longer in politics nor in art a mere appendage to the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the intellectuals paid the price of emancipation in the form of uprootedness and bohemian misery — for which, however, they were adequately compensated by the equally novel *esprit de corps*: They shared the proud conviction that intellectuals, not the upper classes, were the repositories of a changing world and a coming redemption. This uprootedness, moreover, generated a *professional sensitivity* and openness in the members of this stratum for new and radical paradigms.

When the free-floating intellectuals joined movements and usurped their leadership, they denounced the fiasco of a *self-complacent liberalism* and expressed an *acute awareness of incomplete secularization* at the catastrophic end of their "scientific century." The interrelatedness of these two developments — liberalism's failure and incomplete secularization — cannot be stressed enough. The 19th century was full of liberal noises about how "progress" and "scientific spirit" would eliminate dysfunctions and disharmony from social life. However, this proud expertise managed only to trigger World War I, with its hecatombes of casualties. This massive miscalculation of instrumental reason resulted in the suicide of Western Europe as the "natural" epicenter of world politics. The liberal politicians who throughout the scientific century were persistently condescending toward the intellectuals for their ineffectualness proved themselves to be hopeless dilettantes. This, in turn, naturally provoked the utter scorn of the free-floating intellectuals. However, the failures of liberalism made what had been suspected, or expressed, by the first generation of romanticism self-evident: namely, that at the same time as secularization had remained incomplete, the traditional religious panaceas nevertheless remained totally inadequate. Therefore, the hour of a substitute, "this-worldly" religion (or, to use Lukács' aptly coined and perhaps self-referential term: "religious atheism") was at hand. Both with the Nazis, who instituted

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the Teutonic cult of the Führer and who called themselves *Gottesgläubige* (to distinguish themselves from Christians while emphasizing their pagan devotion), and with the Bolsheviks, who raised the Georgian seminarian to the pedestal of a new god, with prerogatives no less divine than those of the deified Roman caesars, free-floating intellectuals or semi-intellectuals lived up to the exigencies of the historical hour.

It is revealing to cast a glance at the two motives shared by rightist and leftist intellectuals for the revival of the redemptive paradigm. Both groups criticized and rejected the liberal paradigm out of hand, calling it banal, superficial, tedious, and, above all, inauthentic — terms of opprobrium that all stem not from an ethics, but from an existentialist metaethics and, above all, from an aesthetics. Lukács' classic text, "Bolshevism as a Moral Problem," stands here as an exemplar. It was committed to paper a few weeks before the dramatic swap of principles: the author's joining communism in December 1918. In fact, for *genuinely moral* reasons, Lukács aligned himself with social democracy in the text, which he took as the embodiment of the liberal paradigm as opposed to Bolshevism. Paraphrasing a hero in Dostoevsky, Lukács asserted that Bolshevism is nothing but the actualization of the diabolical maxim that we shall lie ourselves through to truth. The choice, however, was made with utter resignation, since this giant of the free-floating intelligentsia was fully aware that he chose the "joyless" and "prosaic" task of "piecemeal engineering." This reconciliation to joylessness could explain in part the sudden switch, which stunned so many of his contemporaries. The aesthetic character of the redemptive paradigm — a trait Lukács otherwise regarded as frivolous in all other matters of life — becomes conspicuous if we consider the manner in which the intelligentsia assessed the situation. The world had to be "re-created" and this *ex nihilo* for the redemption paradigm. The ancient gods were dead, as the prophetic Nietzsche had correctly put it, and the raw materials of a disenchanted world were contaminated. In other words, cosmos should be created out of chaos. Furthermore, all these terms tend to assimilate god to the deified artist in the same breath. As the equally prophetic Schlegel had remarked, the artist's divine egoism is nothing but his own self-deification.

Let us turn, then, to a morphological sketch of the representative types of "creators" and "bearers" of the redemptive paradigm. Trotsky comes to mind first as the representative free-floating intellectual and perhaps the greatest one as well. Certainly the one with the most colorful personality, his type is in sharp contrast to that of Lenin, the strictly utilitarian organization man. Lenin was exactly what he wanted to be — *primus inter pares* in a pragmatic collective dictatorship, not a redeemer. I am deliberately avoiding the hackneyed problem of whether Trotsky was a "genuine" Bolshevik against the "perverted" ones and the historically irrelevant question of what would have happened to Soviet Russia had Trotsky come to power. (I am convinced that Trotsky's role as a leader was precluded from the outset, precisely because he was the redemptive intellectual *par excellence*.) He could not be entirely domesticated by the organization and remained only its temporary resident. Nothing expresses that fact more eloquently than the famous scene described by Deutscher: *pour épater les bureaucrats*, Trotsky read French novels ostentatiously during the last sessions of the Politburo in which he participated. He was indeed everything an intellectual bearing the redemptive paradigm ought to be: an excellent journalist, a great rhetorician, a brilliant popular historian — *populism incarnate*. In his first and third period, he was a religious admirer of the "crowd," the masses, those mythological agents of that mythological entity. History, with a capital H. Furthermore, as the free-floating intellectual *par excellence,* he perfected the professional capacity of his stratum. He

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forecasted events long before the professional politicians could sense them and audaciously *changed principles* whenever the historical hour struck. He foresaw social democratic Russia as the new epicenter of world revolution when all his colleagues still held "the much more forward Western comrades" in awe. He also foresaw the mortal danger posed to the approaching Russian Revolution by the Russian Jacobin, whose best critic Trotsky most certainly was. He sensed when the moment of revolution had arrived and jumped on the only available vehicle of practical action — the Bolshevik bandwagon. And he did this not because of ambition (although he was ambitious and theatrical enough), but primarily because this was the hour of redemption and *he felt himself the bearer of the redemptive paradigm.* Hence, his ability to change principles in the most radical manner. The arch-enemy of Russian Jacobinism overnight became a Super-Jacobin. In his polemics against Kautsky, Trotsky gave voice to a contempt for "the masses," whom he adored before and would adore after; now, however, he termed them a conglomerate of "lazy animals." This comment makes him more similar to Mussolini than to Lenin. The latter, of course, always preferred the pragmatic work of terror to verbal excesss.

Luxemburg, with an almost uncanny sensitivity, accurately captured this aspect of Trotsky's personality. In the last chapter of her lifelong polemic against the way in which Russian intellectuals expropriated the revolution, she treated Lenin with animosity but respect (for he only did what he said he intended to do), while she treated Trotsky, the intellectual parvenu of the terror, with ironic contempt. Luxemburg's only mistake was, as her tone indicates, to oversimplify his character by attributing Trotsky's swap of positions simply to ambition and opportunism. In his final decision against the masters who "betrayed" and "perverted" a great revolution — which made him, despite his future political irrelevance, a moral and political monument of the redemptive paradigm — Trotsky proved that he always preferred the work of redemption to ambition and rule.

On the right, we face a wide array of bearers of the redemptive paradigm, a significant number of whom came from the ranks of an uprooted, and therefore free-floating, intelligentsia. Mussolini was not only the first champion, but also the conscious creator of the theory of state totalitarianism as a principle of redemption in a chaos void of gods, ideals and insignia. Croce's sharp eyes detected the first premonitions of this role in the young Mussolini long before it was revealed to wider audiences. When Mussolini was elected to the leadership of the Italian Socialist Party, Croce commented that it meant a victory of Nietzsche rather than Marx. Nor do I use the term "creator" loosely in connection with Mussolini. As he could never be deified to the extent he desired, Mussolini, to console himself, snatched D'Annunzio's invention and turned it upside-down: Where the pre-fascist writer politicized decadent aesthetics, the fascist *Duce* aestheticized stormtroop politics. This explains in part his constructivist-avant-gardist architectural predilections, the spirit of which one can decipher in Chirico's magnificent canvasses and his idiosyncratic style of rhetoric. The latter was deeply modernistic; behind the facade of a Hollywood-style presentation, the grotesque, even the clownish, always appeared.

German National Socialism, on the other hand, was full of second- and third-rate redeemers, almost all failed intellectuals or professionals, who craved for non-religious redemption in an age of bankrupt creeds and doctrines. A conspicuous example is Goebbels, who combined the nadir of cynical capitalist press journalism with the sincere and ruthless fanaticism of a new pagan devotion. In the background was his symbolic intellectual fiasco. (Gundolf had turned him down as a prospective Ph.D.

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student.) A similar case is Rosenberg, the dilettantish but strictly doctrinaire philosopher of National Socialism who never achieved the recognition of his academic colleagues, whom he admired and from whom he had learned so much. But, to climb higher on the rungs of the ladder, let us just glance at Adorno's description of Wagner's character in order to understand what he called Wagner's fascist music. Wagner represented a way of life characterized by bohemian uprootedness. He was never prepared to do any real work for a living, nor was he familiar with the simplest rules of bourgeois decency. He was, however, imbued with the haughty spirit of his own predestination, coupled with a total contempt for the rest of the world and a tyrannical inclination toward his fellow man. This description could also be applied to the Supreme Artist and admirer of Wagner — Hitler himself. After all, had he not, after failing as a free-floating semi-intellectual, created his Reich *ex nihilo*, raised it to stupendous heights, and sent it back to *nihil* again in a thoroughly operatic manner?

While there is a variety of subtypes of the redemptive paradigm on both the left and the right, I must restrict myself to one with deeper and wider theoretical implications, namely, the *representative intellectual*, either right or left, who sensed the advent of the Great Practical Redeemer and who wanted to be counselor to Him. But when the Redeemer did materialize, this type was bitterly disillusioned with his pettiness. I am thinking here, of course, of Lukács, Heidegger and Gentile, though with qualifications: First, their roles as heralds of the new Redeemer were not coextensive with their entire careers; second, their self-selected Redeemers were not identical with respect to values; third, their philosophical *oeuvres*, even if not entirely separable from their roles as herald, cannot be appraised exclusively on the basis of their theoretical advocacy of the Redeemer.

Each actualized this role of counselor in a different but equally tragic (or tragicomic) way. Lukács' philosophy first posited a *collective* Redeemer, the world proletariat, and it was only with the low tide of European social revolution that he personified it in Lenin — a redeemer who, however, had in fact already become obsolete. Lukács paid only the minimal signs of respect to Stalin. Heidegger had, in his well-known academic address, an initial enthusiasm for Hitler, followed by a disillusionment just as well known and an impotent critique consisting of silence and practical adjustment. While neither Lukács nor Heidegger came close to their personified Redeemers, Gentile was a loyal functionary of Mussolini, even when he could barely conceal his contempt for the bloodshed and dilettantish improvisations of the Duce; Gentile's death, a result of quixotic loyalty, does indeed have certain tragic features. Beyond these differences, however, Lucien Goldmann understood the deeper meaning of the common story. The representative intellectual of the post-World War I era ironically acted out the satyr play of one of the dreams of the Enlightenment — the rule of the wise monarch and amateurish philosopher who is being advised and quietly guided by professionals.

In 1945 and 1956, the redemptive paradigm appeared to collapse for good. With the unmasking of the horrendous reality behind the operatic facade and the socialist humanist editorials, first Hitler's then Stalin's camps fell. For the theoretically minded in a stunned world, the two camps appeared to be the direct result of Messianic, amateurish Redeemers. As a result, pragmatic political principles seemed to have irrevocably gained the upper hand — or at least for two decades. The most theoretically self-conscious statesman of the *pax americana,* Henry Kissinger, was a disciple of Metternich, that skeptical-aristocratic man of the Enlightenment who turned against the Enlightenment. At the same time, Kissinger was the incarnation of the

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pragmatic spirit and the deep problematic of Weber's "politics of responsibility." A similar process occurred in Soviet political life under the collective rule of the *nomenklatura* after the fall of Khrushchev. As Zaslavsky has pointed out, the ideologically laden slogan of the "construction of communism" was gradually replaced under Brezhnev by "the Soviet way of life," which is nationalist, cleansed of ideology, and pragmatic.

However, the latent social needs which tend to engender the paradigm of redemptive politics have by no means evaporated. Recently we have witnessed a deeply problematic revival of redemptive politics, once again both on the right and on the left. On the right, Reagan's crusading, moralizing and evangelizing politics justifiably causes consternation in circles wider than leftist ones. A theoretical (as opposed to a directly political) analysis should not restrict itself to the tangible practical, actual or potential dangers of this latest revival. Rather, it should emphasize its roots in American ideological history, which, at the same time as they account for its genesis, set the limits of this development. Lyman and Vidich have shown that in American sociological and political thinking there has always been a traditional religiously grounded and messianistic undercurrent that partly colored and "overdetermined" the dominant pragmatic paradigm. In terms of this tradition, American politics always had to exceed the mere value-free art (or science) of handling practical exigencies. At times, this undercurrent broke through in a liberally benevolent form (under President Wilson); at other times, in a directly venomous fashion (during McCarthyism). But in both instances, it meant that the redemptive principle had moved into the forefront of political thinking and action. And again, in both cases, the practical results were catastrophic.

While the redemptive zeal of the Reagan period seems to be a new chapter in this long history, this very tradition may also set certain limits to current redemptive ambitions. As long as it remains on its own, traditional Christian premises, neoconservatism's inherent fundamentalism prevents it from moving toward any neopagan mythology. And while this tradition can restrict and narrow the concept of liberalism to a dangerous degree (for example, one wonders what Jeane Kirkpatrick means by democracy when she distinguishes between authoritarian and totalitarian governments), it cannot eliminate the concept of democracy from its vocabulary. This too is a social fact. Nor can it practically eliminate certain fundamental institutions of liberal conservative regimes. Needless to say, these remarks are only meant to point out the constraints on a position, not to justify it.

On the left, it is possible to see a similar though not necessarily fundamentalist resurrection of the redemptive paradigm. The main example here is the evangelizing tendency detectible in the environmentalist and anti-nuclear movements. Their political messages can be characterized as "negative redemption." On the one hand, rescuing the environment or human livelihood as such is undeniably a redemptive project. On the other hand, it is negative inasmuch as it is determined by the adversary: threatening, personified or impersonal forces. The prehistory of this leftist resurrection of the redemptive paradigm can be traced back at least to the 1960s. While the movements of the 1960s were not organized generally on the principle of redemption and tended to oppose this-worldly redeemers, incipient elements of the present revival nevertheless began slowly accumulating in that period. The first major wave came in the form of the European cult of Mao. Sartre, with his famous and ominous preface to Fanon's book, where redemption was promised through violence, contributed to the trend. Peter Weiss, in *Marat-Sade* — a genuine literary masterpiece — was another promoter of the redemptive paradigm. If a great work of art can be

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exploited as an ideological document, *Marat-Sade* represents a lapse behind Büchner's *Danton's Death.* Büchner's great anti-Jacobin and truly revolutionary drama in the first half of the 19th century represented a radical break with the cult of "Saint Marat," the Redeemer. Weiss' passion play, in contrast, returns to the atmosphere of Jean-Louis David in whose painting the dead Marat appears as the dead Christ.

The causes of this revival of the redemptive paradigm on the left and the right, as well as its menacing implications are relatively easy to grasp. Its constituents are the apparently longest-lasting depression of capitalism, the total fiasco of global politics conjoined with the objective necessity of global solutions, the loss of an authentic socialist perspective, the further disintegration of party politics, and the emergence of marginalized but socially important groups, e.g., unemployed youth and displaced intellectuals. These elements provide "natural media" for right and left redemptive politics and the primary political consequences are now becoming apparent. Whereas the rightist resurrection of the redemptive paradigm consists in an intensification of the Cold War atmosphere, the leftist's involves re-Stalinization. While both depend on the interplay of several equally important socio-economic conditions, obstacles to the progressive secularization of modern society pose the main cultural problem. Although I am an advocate of secularization, I should point out that the perspectives of secularization have changed drastically since Marx's times. We now see that the abolition of the gods does not necessarily result in freedom and an end to alienation. This is particularly true if the emancipation takes place in a violent form and involves deification of (individual or collective) messianic forces. Nevertheless, the radical expulsion of all this-worldly substitutes for gods and redeemers from politics — while reserving free space for belief and devotion without transforming politics into any kind of pseudo-religion — still belongs to what can, in my view, be called a rational-emancipatory perspective of the progressive secularization of modernity.

Two interrelated factors have led to an appreciation of the radical-democratic paradigm on the Western left. The first was a grasping of the distinction between the liberal and the democratic model — a distinction which necessarily remained hidden as long as the left regarded democracy as a negligible superstructural phenomenon. The second *conditio sine qua non* is already implied in the last clause: the homecoming of the left to democracy, which remains an extremely slow and uneven process. Unfortunately, it is impossible to provide a detailed analysis of the models here, and this problem is exacerbated by the significant differences between American and European concepts of liberalism. However, within these limits, a rough outline of what I regard as the democratic paradigm can still be sketched.

The point of departure for the democratic paradigm, in contrast to the liberal dichotomy of the private and public spheres, is *the tripartite status of the person* in a new social framework. In the first status, the single person, as a repository of all human and political rights, elects his representative political bodies (the parliamentary body in one of its versions). In this status, the person, although capable of entering into associations, is considered apart from them. Furthermore, he enjoys, beyond the legally and pragmatically unrestricted right of voting, access to media in which he can articulate and develop political options. In the second status, the person as *political persona* acts as a member of a communal body, elects, upholds and modifies certain institutions of a *direct democratic system.* Eventual conflicts between the two subsystems are not dysfunctions, but the necessary correlate of this conception, which accepts social conflict as inevitable in all free political establishments; it is, therefore, *not* a theory of a "guaranteed society." In the third status, the person acts as a *member of a social body* in

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which capacity he or she is a unit of collective ownership, that is, a collective proprietor.

These three statuses articulate the private and public domain in a sense that bears no resemblance to the liberal dichotomy. The public domain, understood in terms of the first and second statuses of the person, is divided into two domains. They include representative and direct-democratic space (institutions, modes of political behavior, channels of self-expression). The private domain is equally divided into two subdomains as well: in the private domain, *sensu stricto*, one finds the person as coproprietor of collective ownership, as a communitarian but not directly political being, and in the second subdomain, the intimate one, one finds the person as a subject of duties who acts out his faith and predilections as a family member and participant in religious or social (although not directly political) associations. It is precisely this separated but ultimately integrated model — which does not presuppose an end to conflict — that I call the democratic, or radical-democratic paradigm.

Arendt's theory of democracy was perhaps the first audacious theoretical formulation of this paradigm. She had an important predecessor, Rosa Luxemburg. This connection reveals Arendt's essay on Luxemburg as much more than a homage to a tragic personality. Luxemburg was formed in the Marxist tradition of the withering away of the state and of the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, when, in storms of great revolution, she pondered "the tasks of the proletariat," she came to the conclusion that the revolutionary objective must be the combination of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forms of democracy, instead of the Jacobin confiscation of liberties. Unfortunately, she never provided this crucial insight with an adequate theoretical grounding. Thus, under the heading "extra-parliamentary," Luxemburg included both institutionalized and non-institutionalized forms of democracy (councils and movements alike).

Arendt's theory of democracy, which draws on the American tradition, departs from this point. Its main features are the following: first, Arendt insists on the *demythologization of political theory*. One cannot imagine a more convinced enemy of the redemptive paradigm than Arendt. Her famous aperçu that "evil is banal" was conceived precisely in this spirit. Her passion against redeemers and anti-redeemers (and ultimately Christ and anti-Christ belong in the same school of thought) was so vehement that she simply misread Eichmann. She presented a stupid fellow in lieu of the negative redeemer who was "king" in Budapest in 1944. He was a "purist" in contrast, even in conscious opposition, to his superiors, who were then bargaining desperately with the enemy to save their skins and the loot. Be that as it may, Arendt's warning must be heeded: while in this-worldly political action theory and principles are necessary — i.e., pragmatism is not sufficient — images of "saviors" and "demons" must nevertheless not be tolerated. Only a politics from which these transcendental images have been expurgated can serve actual emancipation. Second, Arendt was convinced that the Marxian idea of the abolition of the political sphere did not simply face insurmountable technical difficulties in modernity, but is in principle undesirable as well. For her, continuous political activity is a value in itself; as with Castoriadis, ancient republican virtue — an attitude hostile to and extremely suspicious of all "redeemers" — thus returns into democratic theory in a streamlined version. Finally, she places the *direct forms* of democracy, from the American township to the French, Russian and Hungarian councils at the pinnacle of her conception, while never ceasing to grasp the theoretical problems of the party political process.

A second version of the radical democratic paradigm is now emerging in which

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capitalism, industrialization and the political process toward radical democracy are conceived as *distinct logics of modernity*. For the time being, this version remains a promise rather than a complete theory. However, it is without doubt a *decidedly immanent* theory of politics and it has a certain chance of becoming a complete theory. In its recognition of no authority other than rational discourse as the "just procedure of legislation," it contains an explicit rejection of all versions of the redeptive paradigm. According to this conception, human beings would be authors of all norms and rules they obey, and they would obey no other authority but self-created ones. Furthermore, this theory implies, on at least a theoretical level, a democratic solution for the transcendence of capitalism. While it is heir to the liberal theory that, explicitly or implicitly, maintained that there is no free man without property, it universalizes this postulate. *Everyone must become proprietor* of the conditions of human social reproduction, at least in some essential respects. From this, an idea of socialism as participatory democracy follows, a utopia in the sense of the Kantian regulative principle that tolerates neither redeemers nor redemption in its domain.

The difficulties concerning the rejection of the redemptive paradigm are manifold. Above all, it requires a radical self-criticism of the intellectual creators and self-appointed bearers of the project. This is always painful. However, recent political history offers some hope in the activity of KOR, the magnificent initiative of Polish intellectuals that lasted more than half a decade in the 1970s and led to the birth of Solidarity. Whatever their actual worldview, the founders and militants of KOR subscribed to the radical-democratic paradigm in that they simply offered their intellectual capacities to Polish workers as a *social service*, not as a messianic gesture. Their heroic but unpretentious deed should serve as further inspiration for political philosophy.

THE POLITICS OF REDEMPTION

by Joel Whitebook

Now that the more overtly political controversies of the recent past have subsided in *Telos,* it is possible to examine the deeper theoretical issues that lie behind them. Despite the importance of the manifest political content of those controversies — and they were indeed important — it is my contention that the fractiousness of the discussion can only be accounted for in terms of the underlying theoretical situation. What was in fact happening with those debates was that the old theoretical-political consensus that had more or less united *Telos* since its inception had fragmented. There had been a shared sense from the beginning, however illusory it might have been, that the Hegelian Marxist or Western Marxist paradigm provided a common project that could encompass the various tendencies within the journal. With the decline of confidence in that paradigm, however, which was itself concomitant with the decline of the New Left and the rise of neo-conservatism in the 1970s, that consensus had begun to dissolve. But, as it was occurring primarily on the theoretical plane, that dissolution could pass relatively unnoticed so long as individuals were not forced to adopt explicit positions on difficult political questions. With the emergence of Solidarity, the peace

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movement, Nicaragua, etc., as issues, it became necessary to come out of the theoretical closet and take a stand on urgent political questions. It only then became apparent to what extent we had begun to disagree with one another.

An area of disagreement that I believe defines one of the main theoretical divisions within the journal concerns the evaluation of the first generation of Western Marxists, the founders of the tradition within which we have been working. While there are those who continue to remain loyal to the original spirit of that perspective, there are others, myself included, who have become somewhat uncomfortable with its underdeveloped appreciation of democracy and its proclivity for eschatological forms of thought. The problems become apparent in an article by Feher that in fact prompted me to write on these topics now. In that article (actually review of Richard Wolin's book on Walter Benjamin)[1] Feher reconfirmed for me a position that I had advanced in an earlier discussion:[2] namely, that what united the generation of pre-War Central European intellectuals, non-Marxist as well as Marxist, was an aesthetic-existential reaction to the ascendance of a rationalized and philistine capitalist world.

From the Zionism of Buber and Scholem, on the one hand, to the Bolshevism of Lukács and Brecht on the other, each sought a strategy for overcoming the *bourgeois*-capitalist world. Moreover, given their assessment of the situation, nothing short of a totalistic transformation of the world would be adequate to the crisis at hand; all attempts at partial amelioration were doomed to fail. Feher thus argues that, in one way or another, the category of *redemption* can be applied with equal validity to the entire first generation of Western Marxists: "Redemption of this world, *not improvement*, was the overt or covert, positive or negative focal point, the historical-philosophical central thesis on which all relevant theories of the Left were based in the pre-World War I era and in the period between the wars. Three distinct experiences forged an eschatological radicalism of this kind in the protagonist of Wolin's book and in others who belonged to the same generation. The first was the ultimate disillusionment in the age and in the idea of 'progress.' The second was World War I and the new century born out of the promise of its carnage. And the third was the Russian Revolution, which radiated a new, universal, almost cosmic dawn for all our heroes, only later to become a more critically assessed drama losing much if not all of its centrality. All those left intellectuals who were nurtured by these experiences could not accept reform, only radical change for their creed, even if this radical need appeared in a particular form in each case."[3] By the end of World War II the situation had changed significantly. While the first two factors leading to a politics of redemption — the disillusionment with the idea of progress and the experience of carnage — held even more strongly, they became disassociated from the third. With the failure of the Russian Revolution, the objective necessity for a totalist transformation of society became detached from justifiable hope in the possibility of such a transformation. However, contrary to what might be expected, the absence of hope at times actually served to strengthen the eschatological position.

While the explicit advocacy of a redemptive politics was common in the 1960s and can still be observed in sectors of the peace, ecology, and women's movements, no one associated with *Telos* is advocating it as such today. Nevertheless, because of the

1. "Reassessing Walter Benjamin," *New German Critique* 28 (Winter 1983), pp. 170-180. Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (New York, 1982).
2. "Saving the Subject: Modernity and the Problem of the Autonomous Individual,' *Telos,* 50 (Winter 1981-82), pp. 94ff.
3. Feher, "Reassessing Walter Benjamin," *op. cit.,* p. 172.

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heritage of Western Marxism as well as the heritage of the 1960s, I believe that certain redemptive figures of thought are sedimented into the collective thinking of the journal, if one can speak of such a thing. It is my contention that the unthematized disagreements about these redemptive motifs, which have undergone a critical re-evaluation in certain quarters of the journal, constituted a large part of the subtext in the recent controversies. I would therefore like to present an ideal-typical sketch of the politics of redemption and contrast it to what I shall call the politics of *Mündigkeit*. Although this sketch will be admittedly stylized and necessarily abstract, it may still help facilitate discussion. The term *Mündigkeit* of course is taken from Kant and is generally translated as "autonomy" or "maturity." I shall list some of the basic assumptions of the left counter-enlightenment's analysis of modernity that foster a politics of redemption:

1) We can call the first assumption *practical holism*. It is assumed in Weberian fashion that modernity institutes an organized unity of thought, action, institutions, etc., and that this totality tends to expand its colonization and incorporate all heterogeneous, pre-modern elements into itself. Furthermore, a rather monolithic or undifferentiated account is generally given of that totality. One underlying process, whether it be commodification, rationalization, reification, instrumentalization, or what have you, is identified as the essential dynamic of modernity of which all other developments are epiphenomena. As it is essentially a monolith, all apparently positive features are just that — apparent — and the formation is seen as corrupt *in toto*.

2) As modernity is viewed as a totality that must be holistically overcome, and as no positive feature is recognized within modernity that might serve as a foothold for immanent critique, the politics of redemption tends to be characterized by the constant search for the Other, that is, for the uncontaminated element outside the totality that might serve as the fulcrum for its holistic transcendence. Once the proletariat was abandoned as the class that is in civil society but not of it, various candidates have been proposed for the role of an agency that has somehow eluded the totalizing dynamism of the system: e.g., avant-garde art, the sexual instincts, the third world, women, homosexuals. All of these candidates are theoretically homologous in that they serve the same necessary function of providing a supposed Archimedean point.

3) A reason for the quest for an uncontaminated Other, as it were, is the disparagement of Reason. That is to say, Reason as such is identified with Instrumental Reason, Enlightenment with Positivism, and, as they are a major part of the problem, Reason and Enlightenment cannot serve as parts of the solution. Indeed no matter how the analysis of Galilean science, identitarian logic, the strategic rationality of the marketplace, bureaucratization, reification, commodification, Taylorism, etc., are combined, the totalization of Instrumental Reason is taken as part of this essential tendency of modernity.

4) Along these same lines, a notion of practical reason, in contradistinction to Instrumental Reason, is not acknowledged. The legal and moral advance of modernity — Bourgeois Right as it is often called — is not acknowledged as a real advance. Instead, legal right is dismissed as only an epiphenomenon of the market, the rules of the game for capitalism, if you like. And while it does indeed serve that function, that function does not exhaust its content. Likewise, in contrast to premodern substantive ethics, *Sittlichkeit*, modern morality is viewed as a domain of ineffectual privatism.

5) As the left counter-enlightenment's opposition to modernity was more aesthetic and existential than ethical and political, its revulsion at the general "soul-lessness" of bourgeois culture played a central role. To be sure, the opposition to the philistinism of *bourgeois* culture could assume diametrically opposed forms. On the one hand, as we

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know, Brecht and Benjamin attempted to locate a critical-emancipatory potential within mass culture itself. Adorno, on the other hand, had recourse to the esoteric avant-garde work of art as the locus of effective opposition to the expansion of the culture industry. While the cultural history of the 1970s and 1980s seems, in my opinion, to be proving Adorno the more correct — the post-modernist celebration of the vernacular notwithstanding — there is another point I would raise. It may be the case, as Agnes Heller has argued, that the *possibility* of a certain banalization of culture is the risk we have to take for a higher ethical achievement, namely, the institutionalization of subjective freedom that Hegel considered the major achievement of the modern world. Given the elitism of his perspective and his relative unconcern for democracy, the idea that it might be desirable to place a higher priority on subjective freedom than high culture was, of course, unthinkable for Adorno.

6) Finally, with respect to political practice, the politics of redemption can have two apparently contradictory results that in fact follow with equal validity from the basic position. A strategy of hibernation as well as an ultra-leftism can be derived with equal justification from the view that there are no immanent emancipatory forces in the modern world. One can hibernate and wait for the day when a fissure will open in the seamless totality, either by historical accident or divine intervention (which, in any case, will have the same logical status). Or, through sheer creative volition, one can seek to forge marginal elements of society, which have supposedly eluded integration into the system, into an effective emancipatory movement. What I would like to stress is that it is impossible for either position to be part of any existing social or political movement. Given the emphatic requirement of redemption, all existing movements must *a priori* be dismissed as hopelessly inadequate at best or pseudo-oppositional at worst.

The position I want to juxtapose to the left counter-enlightenment's politics of redemption is, as I mentioned, what I will call the politics of *Mündigkeit*. The most obvious representative of this position is Habermas. In addition, the Budapest Circle should also be included here. Indeed, it is interesting that the products of Soviet-style societies can often discern and appreciate better the core accomplishments of the West than we ourselves can. Finally, Castoriadis, with his concept of the autonomous society, should certainly be included here.

What, then, was the central lesson learned from Habermas by those of us around *Telos* who had begun our political and theoretical careers with orthodox Marxism, Lukács and the early Frankfurt School? What Habermas taught us, which may seem commonplace or obvious now, was an appreciation of the real advances of Modernity, — more specifically, of the accomplishments of the bourgeois-democratic tradition. To those of us immersed in Marxism or Critical Theory, it smacked of heresy or, worse yet, liberalism, when Habermas argued that the accomplishment of that tradition was not only the institutionalization of capitalism but also the recognition and institutionalization of certain universal principles. Contrary to the explicit teaching of orthodox Marxism and the implicit teaching of the old Frankfurt School — which was often more orthodox than it cared to admit — he maintained that these principles embodied a certain intrinsic validity and were not simply the ideological rationalizations of capitalism. This claim, in turn, required the methodological-epistemological critique of Marx and the early Frankfurt School, the centerpiece of which was the introduction of the dualistic framework; communication theory can be viewed as an attempt to separate the universalistic kernel from the ideological husk of Bourgeois Right by reinterpreting its principles on a communicative rather than a contractual

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(which is to say, economistic) model. To be sure, we must not forget the critique of capitalism and must constantly remind ourselves that these principles have largely a counterfactual status, which means they are not fully realized or are in fact regularly violated in practice. Nevertheless, for the first time in history, they are recognized as valid principles and even the system is forced to appeal to them to carry out its dirty work.

One element of this position is a recognition of the uniqueness of the West. Whether one emphasizes the continuity between the Greeks and the moderns, as Castoriadis does, or, like Habermas, stresses the novelty of modernity, there is nevertheless an agreement that the working out of the idea of autonomous individuality is the unique project of the Occident. And this appraisal of the Greco-Western tradition constitutes, I believe, one of the underlying factors in the recent debates in *Telos*. It accounts for the reluctance to join in with a wholesale condemnation of the West, and particularly the United States, as the greatest evil in the world — a sort of the mirror image of Reagan's demonology. It also accounts, I believe, for the reluctance to give our unqualified support to certain anti-imperialist groups and Third World countries that have little respect for and often violate fundamental norms. And finally, I think it accounts for the enthusiastic support for *Solidarity*, for here is a group that is trying to carve out something like civil society in the Eastern bloc.

Against this background, let me enumerate the consequences of Habermas' theoretical innovations *vis-à-vis* the left counter-enlightenment.

1) It should be obvious that Habermas does not view modernity as corrupt or fallen *in toto*. On the contrary, he believes it has made normative advances that are clearly superior to all premodern ethical positions. This does not mean that he cannot at the same time hold a theory of the methodical expansion of the domain of Instrumental Reason into the lifeworld. Indeed, it is precisely in this encroachment of administrative rationality into the lifeworld that Habermas would locate the so-called pathologies of modernity. He wants to defend the "project of modernity" against the dual, equally abstract temptations of a regression into *Gemeinschaft* or a flight into *post-histoire* by asserting the enlightenment's tradition of practical reason against its legacy of instrumental reason.

2) It follows that Habermas does not identify reason as such with instrumental reason. Indeed, his fundamental theoretical move against the implicit monism of Horkheimer and Adorno was to introduce the distinction between instrumental and practical reason. A price that was paid for this was to confine nature to the status of an object of instrumental manipulation.

3) As certain practical norms are sedimented in modern society and, furthermore, as the requirement that fundamental norms be discursively justified is sedimented as well, Habermas argues that a foothold for immanent critique exists within modernity. Going even further, he argues, contrary to Adorno and Marcuse, that critique is in fact easier in modern than premodern societies. For the first time in history, the requirement for rational justification of basic norms has been incorporated into the self-understanding of a society. The heteronomous appeal to dogmatic tradition can in principle no longer serve as a valid justification for fundamental norms.

4) As reason is no longer viewed as hopelessly instrumentalized and therefore useless for emancipatory critique, it is not necessary to search for an extra-rational standpoint from which to criticize the established order. A standpoint exists. It need only be elaborated.

5) Finally, a word about practical holism. Hegel, Arendt, and the hermeneuticists

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have in their own respective ways pointed to the considerable dangers involved in trying to impose on an ethical community political norms that are external to it. While we can appreciate the motives that led the left counter-enlightenment to posit the need for an eschatological rupture in history, the imposition of extrinsic norms on a community always runs the substantial risk of terror — either psychic or real — against the majority.

I do not consider the material presented thus far to be particularly problematic. To be sure, the presentation may contain abstractions and distortions inevitable in the type of stylized sketch I have attempted, and it might even be the case that no individual thinker can be identified who fits completely in either camp as I have delineated them here. But these are the well-known costs of the ideal-typical approach I have taken. Now, however, I shall turn to what I consider the serious questions that arise from the analysis I have been developing.

It cannot be denied that Habermas' position represents a substantial attenuation of the radical project as it was conceived by the generation of pre-war Marxists. In many ways, he resolves their dilemmas by narrowing the scope of the project in a manner analogous to the way Kant avoided the antinomies of traditional metaphysics by narrowing the scope of the valid employment of reason. For example, as I tried to show in an earlier article, Habermas secured the epistemological-normative foundations of critical theory at the cost of jettisoning an emphatic demand of the early Frankfurt School, namely, the reconciliation with nature.[4] And, in general, the danger is that, despite the admitted theoretical advances, the radical project will become so denuded of its affective content that politically it will only be able to generate what Habermas himself has called a "joyless reformism" and lose its motivational power as a result.

The relative strengths and weaknesses of a politics of *Mündigkeit* derive from precisely the same source, namely, its minimalism, as it were. That is to say, there are certain minimal, yet universalistic, principles connected with the recognition of the person *qua* person, which were recognized with the bourgeois-democratic revolutions and which must not be abrogated but defended and elaborated in any acceptable radical politics. This is a non-negotiable demand, as we used to say undemocratically in the 1960s. This means that the old Stalinist argument (still being repeated in parts of the Third World today) that revolutionary movements and societies need not concern themselves with mere bourgeois formal justice because they are instituting substantive justice will never wash again. Touraine recently argued in a lecture at the New School for Social Research that, with the Russian Revolution, the revolutionary movement and the democratic movement parted company. However, as the demand for democracy had been part of the legitimating rhetoric of the revolutionary movement, intellectuals such as Sartre had to go through absurd contortions to show that the revolutionary movement was only apparently anti-democratic and that it was in fact practicing a higher form of democracy — Kampuchea as substantive democracy.

Once the minimal but universal principles have been accepted, two questions arise. First, what content (if any) with respect to institutions, culture, etc., can be derived from them? And, second, if no content can be derived, what content is at least compatible with them? These questions can perhaps best be illustrated with an example. The following argument is sometimes made in an attempt to reconcile the politics of

4. See Joel Whitebook, "The Problem of Nature in Habermas," *Telos*, 40, (Summer 1979), pp. 41-69, and Habermas, "A Reply to my Critics," *Habermas: Critical Debates*, ed. John Thompson and David Held (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), pp. 238ff.

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redemption with the politics of *Mündigkeit*. On the one hand, it is admitted that, after the rise of modernity, the only basic norms that can be legitimately defended are the interconnected universal norms of humankind and personhood, and that all substantive doctrines of the good life and true and false needs — no matter how appealing — are intrinsically connected with premodern particularism. Heller describes this point as follows: "Simultaneously with the dismantling of traditional norms of conduct, several norms and values have gradually become universalized. Particularistic integrations no longer serve as uncontestable points of reference for dignified, honorable or virtuous behavior. The idea of being a 'man,' instead of being a 'good citizen' or a 'good Christian' or a 'good servant,' gains ground vigorously. Establishing one's self-identity with the emphatic sentences: 'I am a man,' 'I am a human being,' by renouncing allegiance to every organic, traditional bond and institution, this representative gesture of the Enlightenment, which has not been radically challenged ever since, is based on two interconnected value commitments. One of them is a commitment to *humankind* as the only binding integration, the other is the commitment to the uniqueness of *human personality*. All universalized values like freedom, equality, fraternity, scientific knowledge, alleviation of suffering, and the like have either recourse to humankind or to the unique personality, or to both."[5] It follows from this that civil society, conceived of as a realm in which the right freely to determine one's needs is institutionally guaranteed, must be preserved and the attempt to dictate needs from above must be ruled out in any transformation of society.

A further step is sometimes made, however, in which it is argued that, were a formally emancipated humanity in a position to legislate its forms of life, its choice would undoubtedly conform to the vision contained in a politics of redemption. In other words, a thought experiment can be conducted in which a formally emancipated humanity is pictured in something like Rawls' original position or Habermas' ideal speech situation. The claim is, then, that given such a situation, the substantive content of a politics of redemption would necessarily be chosen, thus fulfilling the demands of both paradigms. Two points should be made here. First, there is no necesssary connection between formal emancipation and *any* given form of life — redemptive or otherwise. To be sure, certain forms of life can be excluded at the outset on formal grounds, but, because of the disjunction between formal conditions and substantive content, none can be derived *per se*. Once the democratic paradigm has been accepted, one must be prepared to accept a plurality of life forms, some of which may not be to one's political or cultural taste. This is not to say that an emphatic utopian position cannot be argued for in political debate as long as it does not violate the principles of democracy. It is only to say that it must be remembered that it is only one position among many, containing no intrinsically privileged status, and that it must achieve a democratic consensus if it is to succeed.

The second point I would make is this: The above argument assumes that the redemptive paradigm remains desirable and that it is compatible with the democratic paradigm. The only problem, then, is to reconcile the two paradigms with each other. I have, however, grown skeptical about both of these assumptions, and for similar reasons. I have begun to suspect, that is, that the redemptive paradigm ultimately rests on certain absolutist presuppositions that are undesirable in themselves and incompatible with the democratic perspective. The absolutist presuppositions strike me as vestiges of theological and metaphysical forms of thought which can no longer be

5. "The Dissatisfied Society, *"Praxis International,* 2 (January 1983), p. 361.

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defended after the decentering of modern consciousness. And it seems to me that the working through of this decentering and the problems of finitude that it involves is essential to the attainment of the democratic standpoint.

Regarding the motivational potential of democratic ideals, a distinction should be made between societies where formal democracy is still being established and those where it has been institutionalized for some time. In the former, there can be no question concerning the ability of democratic ideals to mobilize mass support that is anything but "joyless." Indeed, one has only to recall the festivities that seized the streets of Barcelona, Buenos Aires or Rio de Janeiro to celebrate the transition to democracy to see that this is the case. The situation in democratic societies, where formal democracy is taken for granted and even viewed with a certain cynicism, is different. This is not to overlook the fact that neo-conservatives have recently attacked principles that had until then been regarded as inviolable, and that those attacks must be vigorously opposed. I do not believe, however, that this sort of defensive politics alone will burgeon into a significant movement. Actually, the very development of the neo-conservative and neo-fundamentalist movements point to an area where a meaningful politics might in fact be emerging — namely, the so-called pathologies of modernity to which these movements are a regressive reaction.

The diagnosis of the pathologies of modernity points to a more substantive notion of democratization, if you will, which has been more or less present in Habermas' thinking since some of his earliest works. If the pathologies result from the persistent encroachment of administrative rationality into the lifeworld and the consequent destruction and de-normatization of forms of interaction mediated by ordinary language, then the democratic counter-strategy would be to rehabilitate, defend and expand public spheres against the penetration of technical reason. And it is indeed possible to interpret the new social movements in terms of these dynamics. The thesis that these movements are generated by the dislocations caused in the lifeworld by the encroachment of administrative rationality is, I believe, no longer controversial. However, when we turn to the self-understanding of these movements, the situation becomes more ambiguous. Let me illustrate these ambiguities with an example:

There is a debate that, in one form or another, has been continuous in the women's movement almost since its inception and which is by no means decided today. On the one side, we find the more familiar leftist-progressivist position. It seeks formal equality between the sexes so that women can claim their right to equal opportunity in the marketplace. Proponents of this view have at times even attempted to expand the sphere of formal-juridicial relations into the domestic realm in order to augment their leverage in gaining benefits for women, e.g., the wages for housework movement. This position adopts the standpoint of modernity, as do all civil rights movements, by insisting that, after the recognition of the rights of the person *qua* person, its constituency cannot legitimately be discriminated against on the basis of any particularistic feature, e.g., sex, color, race, etc. At the same time, however, its advocates tend to remain insensitive to the pathologies that, along with democratization, accompany the process of modernization, which to say, they accept integration into the workplace as an adequate goal without questioning the dehumanizing aspects of the market itself. The opposing position begins from the opposite direction — that is, with the pathologies of modernity. Proponents of this view argue that, far from accepting integration into the market as the *desideratum*, market relations should themselves be criticized for their competitiveness, alienation and general inhumanity. They often counterpose the domestic sphere — as a sphere of affect, compassion and love — to the alienation of

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the market, and argue that these "domestic" values ought to be defended against the incursions of market rationality and even promulgated in the society at large. The fact that many of the new psychopathologies, which have been the focus of so much attention, can be traced to dislocations in the modern family since World War II adds support to their case. Advocates of this position often argue, moreover, that as these "domestic" values are most intimately connected with women, women have a special role in humanizing civil society. Thus, rather than suppressing the domestic values and marching into the market on an equally alienated footing with men, it is argued that women should preserve their special sensibility in order to domesticate the war of all against all. There are proponents of this position who embrace an explicitly traditional self-understanding: they identify the market with modernity as such, and seek to rehabilitate traditionalist values in the face of expanding market rationality.

The two positions I have just sketched are, I trust, familiar. And indeed they should be, for they tend to reproduce themselves, in one form or another, in all the new social movements, e.g., the urban movement, the ecology movement. Two poles always tend to emerge, one which stresses the progressive democratizing side of modernity, and one which stresses its destructive pathological side. These difficulties cannot be resolved at the level of theory for the ambiguities are in the object, modernity, itself. What theory can provide is an elucidation of the nature of the ambiguities and thereby provide some aid in forming concrete political judgements. An element of casuistic argumentation is however generally going to be necessary in individual cases. We can, nevertheless, lay down one general principle. However great the temptation, the normative advances of modernity must never be sacrificed in the attempt to correct its admitted pathologies. Indeed, there is something peculiar, as Hegel already observed, in the idea of choosing to be a traditionalist. Even when we choose to preserve traditional modes of activity today, whether it be in architecture, the arts, agriculture or what have you, that decision does not possess the nature-like compulsion of unmediated tradition but is reflective. As such, it can be made according to democratic principles. Agnes Heller has formulated the admonition well: "No one can candidly deny that the proud statement 'I am a human being,' in its capacity as pointing to our universal as well as unique existence, is dear to us. I am going to make the statement more personal: it is dear to me and to everyone who does not want to revoke the Enlightenment. And I wish to have no ambiguities regarding the fact that, despite all its malignant side-effects and consequences . . . I do consider the universalization of certain values as the only ethical progress achieved in the history of humankind. As well, I reject all neo-fundamentalist movements aiming at de-Enlightenment as the embodiments of regression. But this resolute stand does not prevent me from facing the fact that something went wrong with our value system and with the system of needs it shaped."[6]

As the position I am attempting to articulate is often dismissed by more traditional leftists as neo-conservative or neo-liberal, something ought to be said to distinguish it from neo-conservatism. It cannot be denied that there is a certain convergence between this type of position and neo-conservatism — in contrast to traditional liberalism, for example — with respect to the description of the social and cultural pathologies of modernity. This convergence is the result, in large part, of the fact that the neo-conservatives have taken over the critical theorists' critique of modern culture and attempted to graft it onto a conservative analysis. The major difference is, however, where the neo-conservatives blame these cultural pathologies on leftwing intellectuals

6. *Ibid.*, p. 364.

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and avant-garde counter-culturalists, the critical theorists trace them to the expansion of market-type relations into the lifeworld and the dissolution of the fabric of social life that results from it.[7] Thus, as the market is the root cause of the problem, what the neo-conservatives advocate — i.e. the disencumbering and strengthening of market relations — would in fact only worsen the situation. And this brings us to the crux of the matter, namely, the neo-conservative conviction that the market is the *locus* of democracy. Thus, again, both the neo-conservative and the critical theorist oppose *étatism,* but for different reasons: whereas the neo-conservative seeks to defend the economy from the restrictions of state intervention, the critical theorist wants to protect the lifeworld from the encroachments of administrative rationality. Democratization, as I am talking about it, would thus mean resisting the expansion of administrative rationality and creating spheres of public discourse within the life world. This appears to me as a continuation of the tradition of participatory democracy.

Finally, I would like to conclude with some comments concerning a deeper philosophical question which underlies these reflections: namely, what does it mean to think and act as a modern? Two of the great *Aufklärer,* Kant and Freud — who the Frankfurt School construed as a "materalized" Kant anyway — identified enlightenment with maturity. To the question "What is enlightenment?" Kant, as we know, answered: the overcoming of self-imposed immaturity and the ability to think for oneself. Similarly, it can easily be shown that, for Freud, illness equalled infantalism and health equalled maturity; to be healthy is not to have one's responses to the world filtered through parental *imagos,* but to think for oneself as an autonomous adult. We also know from Freud that infantilism involves an enormous sense of grandiosity and fantasies of omnipotence, and that an essential ingredient of maturation, for the individual and the species, involves relinquishing that grandiosity and "admitting the full extent of [our] helplessness and . . . insignificance in the machinery of the universe."[8] Indeed, Freud believed that he, along with Copernicus and Darwin, were the three major figures responsible for the decentering of modern consciousness and that much of the hostility toward psychoanalysis resulted from this narcissistic blow. What maturity has to offer in recompense for the abandoned desires of grandiosity is the satisfaction of dignity, autonomy, and mutual recognition. It cannot be denied however, that the grandiose disavowal of finitude — death, suffering and lack — cannot be compensated. In this respect, maturity is relatively austere and completely disconsolate.

Earlier in his career, Habermas had understood the difference between his position and Adorno's precisely in these terms. Where Adorno subscribed to the redemptive notion of reconciliation as his fundamental norm, Habermas took the enlightenment idea of *Mündigkeit* as his. And Habermas explicitly traced this fact about Adorno to an unmastered religious element in the latter's thinking. He argued, moreover, that had Adorno been willing to relinquish the norm of reconciliation and adopt the norm of *Mündigkeit,* he would have been able to avoid the impasse of his philosophy: "The concept of a categorically different science and technology is as empty as the idea of a universal reconciliation is without basis. The latter has its ground instead in the need for consolation and solicitude in the face of death, which the most insistent critique cannot fulfill. Without theology this pain is inconsolable, although even it should not be indifferent to the possibility of a society whose reproduction would no longer

7. See Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity, *"New German Critique,* 22, (Winter 1981), pp. 6ff.

8. "The Future of an Illusion," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Vol. XXI, trans. and ed. James Strachey, (London, 1975), p. 49.

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require the exploitation of our repressed anxieties . . . Adorno, undeviating atheist that he was, nevertheless hesitated to moderate the idea of reconciliation to that of autonomy and responsibility."[9] It is interesting to observe here how Habermas' rejection of a qualitatively different science and technology does not only arise out of epistemological considerations, but that those epistemological considerations hang together with an ethics of autonomy and maturity, as they did in Kant.

More recently, however, Habermas has changed his position substantially.[10] He no longer argues that Adorno should have exchanged the norm of reconciliation for the norm of *Mündigkeit.* Rather, he now argues that reconciliation should have been retained as a goal, but that Adorno should have moved from a philosophy of consciousness to a philosophy of intersubjectivity in order to have achieved that goal. Habermas is maintaining, in other words, that only by moving to a theory of communicative action like his own could Adorno have fulfilled the intentions of his own philosophy. The point is, however, that those intentions do not remain the same when the transition is made from a philosophy of consciousness to a philosophy of intersubjectivity. It is Habermas' claim that the notion of reconciliation can only be properly applied to the relationship between speaking subjects and not to the relationship between speaking subjects and non-speaking nature; an adequate theory of reconciliation can, therefore, only be formulated as a theory of intersubjectivity. But this is exactly the point of contention between the two thinkers which was formulated much more clearly when Habermas constrasted his own theory of *Mündigkeit,* which eschews the possibility of reconciliation, and Adorno's theory of reconciliation. Adorno's emphatic *desideratum* was the reconciliation with nature, and he would not have recognized his philosophical intentions in anything short of that. To my mind, Habermas' new terminological scheme and attempt to assimilate Adorno's doctrine of reconciliation to his theory of communicative action is not conceptually useful. It blurs differences that ought to be kept distinct, not just for the purpose of an accurate interpretation of Adorno, but for adumbrating major philosophical-political options that are available to us as well.

Philosophically then, to be modern is to be post-metaphysical. Collective insight has somehow been gained into the fact that the quest for ultimate grounds, which characterized the tradition of first philosophy, is hopelessly *aporetic.* We shall see, however, that this does not mean that there is no need to fill the space vacated by traditional philosophy as Freud and the positivists believed. At any rate, with the debunking of traditional metaphysics, which was the heir to religion, the quest for the absolute was debunked as well. Adorno's requirement that we not abandon an emphatic notion of truth at the same time as we make no appeal to the absolute is, however, too strong; a post-metaphysical notion of the truth can never be thoroughly emphatic. Nonetheless, he is correct in pointing to the central philosophical dilemma of our time: namely, how to think and operate without an appeal to the absolute, on the one hand, without falling into Nietzschean nihilism, on the other."[11]

I would like to try to link speculatively these philosophical considerations with the psychoanalytic observations I made above. I believe that it could be shown, through

9. "Theodor Adorno: The Primal History of Subjectivity," *Philosophical-Political Profiles,* trans. Frederick Lawrence, (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), p. 108.

10. See *Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. I: Reason and the Rationalization of Society,* trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston, 1984), pp. 390ff.

11. See also Cornelius Castoriadis, *Crossroads in the Labyrinth,* trans. Kate Soper and Martin Ryle, (Cambridge, Mass., 1984). [See also Whitebook's review in this issue of *Telos*]

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an investigation of the Greeks, that the development from religion to philosophy represents in part a depersonification of the quest for the parents. Whereas in myth and religion the categories of explanation are personal, familial and sexual — e.g. the world is created through sexual intercourse — with the Ionian nature philosophers they became depersonified into the various *arché*, and with Parmenides, Plato and Aristotle they became further transformed into ideatic principles. My thesis, stated dogmatically and baldly, is that the search for ultimate grounds in religion and philosophy, represents a sublimation of the search for the certainty of absolute parental authority. The relinquishing of the quest for the absolute theoretically represents, then, the relinquishing of dogmatic parental authority. This is one way to interpret the break with tradition which, after all, is ultimately a kinship notion.

With respect to practical philosophy, I believe the universal notions of humanity and personhood are the only tenable normative conceptions in a post-metaphysical world. The temptation to rehabilitate a substantive doctrine of the good life is certainly understandable in a world which seems adrift because of a lack of compelling values. However, as Heller has argued, all such notions must ultimately have recourse to an hierarchical ontology and metaphysically ordained status system which are theoretically and practically unacceptable. Such a post-metaphysical normative theory may not contain all that one yearns for or sought in a politics of redemption. It is, however, all that can be reasonably justified. To again turn to a psychoanalytic perspective, Castoriadis has made the rather astonishing statement that there is something radically democratic about the basic argument of *Totem and Taboo,* which, we will remember, Freud lifted right from Hobbes. No matter how brutal, crude and primitive the brother clan may be, one fact remains: no one can ever rise up again as the father and dominate the others. However unutopian and imperfect, the brothers must work things out among themselves. Which is to say, no position exists which is external to the structure of their mutual interaction and which can authoritatively ground that interaction.[12]

This is not to imply that we have an acceptable notion of autonomy or maturity ready-at-hand in Freud — or in Kant or Weber for that matter. Autonomous thinking requires the critique of the received notions of autonomy. Take Freud's positivism, for example: to understand his mistake, we have to distinguish between two conceptions of science. The first refers to the general project of demythologization in which illusion is methodically replaced by knowledge and stretches from the Greek *physikoi* through Einstein. The second refers to the doctrine of science contained in nineteenth century positivism. Freud's error was to identify the two, that is, to assume that the project of demythologization — which is still worth defending — had finally found its proper, universal method in positivist science. To be mature, then, was to give up the illusions of religion and philosophy — which Freud held in almost equal contempt — and to accept the positivist *Weltanschauung,* which was supposedly no *Weltanschauung* at all. To his credit, Freud raised the objection against himself that his faith in science was simply his personal consoling illusion. And the subsequent development of philosophy and science proved him in large part right, for it has been shown that positivism itself was one more idol to be debunked. This means that the supercession of philosophy by science is in part annulled. The questions that were foreclosed by positivism can be reopened for philosophical thinking — albeit in an altered way.

Finally, a word about Freud's apoliticism. First, we cannot deceive ourselves about Freud's (or Weber's) scepticism concerning the Russian Revolution. Their doubts

12. *Ibid.,* p. 62.

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turned out to be more or less well founded. Nor can we deceive ourselves about Freud's assessment of humankind's potential for aggression. Events since his death have demonstrated a capacity for destruction which before that had perhaps only been equalled in the world destruction fantasies of psychotics. Strangely enough, however, the even more dire situation that has developed since 1930, the year that *Civilization and its Discontents* was published, seems to me to argue in favor of political action rather than detachment. Indeed, one wonders "after all that has happened" whether Freud would have been able to maintain his detached position today. It seems to me that history has ruled it out as an option. Eros' "immortal adversary" is dangerously close to winning a total victory today, but even to describe the situation in these ontological terms, despite their considerable appeal, distorts the situation; for it suggests the struggle is taking place in complete independence of the will of men and women. While we must find a way of effectively intervening today, we cannot employ the denials and self-deceptions of earlier generations of radicals to bolster our enthusiasm. This, it seems to me, is our situation and our challenge.

THE BANKRUPTCY OF LEFT-WING *KULTURKRITIK*: THE "AFTER THE AVANT-GARDE" CONFERENCE

by Richard Wolin

The words of the keynote speaker at the "After the Avant-Garde" Conference (University of Houston, March 6-9, 1985) were destined to fall on deaf ears. Here was the 55-year-old Hans Magnus Enzensberger — poet, essayist, editor of *Kursbuch* —who 15 years earlier had argued for a left-wing "takeover" of the media for revolutionary ends.[1] Yet this night he had a more Socratic wisdom to convey: an innate distrust of the concept of the avant-garde, a notion that suggests the obligation of a self-styled political or artistic elite to become standard-bearers for the rest of humanity — presumably, the unenlightened "masses" — who will in due time follow suit. Enzensberger subjected the sheer presumption of this conception to unsparing critical scrutiny. Its political consequences in the lands of "really existing socialism" have been rehearsed too frequently to merit reconsideration here. Yet the significant proximity of the 20th-century artistic avant-garde — dadaism, futurism, surrealism, expressionism — to the ideology of *political* vanguardism consistently lurked in the background of Enzensberger's analysis. Above all, Enzensberger took exception to the unbridled arrogance of self-proclaimed artistic elites who were no longer content to produce "mere" works of art, but expected *their* works of art to transform the world. The artistic avant-garde promoted the ideal of a "reintegration of art and life-praxis."[2] At times the exaggerated self-importance of these chess-thumping artists, armed with their manifestos, seemed merely farcical. There was nevertheless a repulsively narcissistic streak to their purges and counter-purges, their unbending self-righteousness, their puritanical exclusive-

1. Enzensberger, "Constituents of a Theory of the Media," in *The Consciousness Industry* (New York, 1974), pp. 94-128.
2. Cf. the account in Peter Bürger in *Theory of the Avant-garde* (Minneapolis, 1984).

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ness. They were the Elect, or so they were convinced and tried to convince others. It was in no way accidental that Breton, who was so fond of frequent excommunications, was known by both friends and enemies as "le Pape." Enzensberger's point was simple and sobering: the world has had enough of such bombast and theatricality. Artists should concern themselves with creating works of art. If the world is to be transformed, this will occur due to social forces that function at an infinite remove from those of artistic posturing and pretense.

These were the words that were destined to fall on deaf ears (despite the heroic efforts of the conference organizers, Rick Spuler and Sandy Frieden). Vintage leftist catchwords and phraseology were dusted off and put on display, now spiced with a generous dose of fashionable post-structuralist verbiage. Familiar appeals were made to "refunctioning," an anachronistic notion of "popular culture," postmodernist cultural bricolage comfortably co-existing with the world of multinational corporations, black and women's literature (the inherently good "other"), and even an appeal to the radio-engendered fascist "cult of Céline" (for whom "anti-Semitism is utopia") as a supposedly viable alternative model of populism.

The pathetic ring to many of these alternatives was accentuated by the self-referential academic discussion in which such far-flung expectations of reaching the "masses" (few of whom were in attendance) and changing the world were considered. Such tendencies, rather than yielding up a democratic-enlightenment model of social change, merely reproduce the logic of the vanguardism concerning which Enzensberger was so skeptical. *Plus ça change. . . .*

Some of the aforementioned proposals would be difficult to take seriously were they not symptomatic of graver ills of left-wing discourse. The facile discussion of Céline-inspired fascist populism — if the masses like it, it must be good — though it inspired few supporters (more astonishing was the fact that it provoked few detractors), falls into this category. Presumably an appeal to a Blochian conception of *Ungleichzeitigkeit* was intended. However, the fascist "populisms" of the 1930s were carefully orchestrated pseudo-populisms, not immediate outpourings of popular sentiment. Why the cult of Céline was any different in this respect remained highly unclear. Has the giddy atmosphere of postmodern *différance* brought with it a return of the "end of ideology" thesis, to the point where left and right populisms have become indistinguishable?

More deserving of serious scrutiny, however, was the effort to replay Adorno's dichotomy between "high" and "low" art, yet with the terms reversed. The argument proceeded on Adorno's home turf, through a discussion of musical trends from the mid-19th century to the present. The refrain that repeatedly got a rise from the audience was the incantatory polemic against so-called "serious music" (read: music that defies easy consumption by placing demands on its listeners) — "music listened to by .03 to .04 percent of the public." In this case as well, the attempt to fetishize administered (commodified) popular taste *vis-à-vis* the bad aestheticism of the Schoenberg school backfires grievously. In Rousseauean terms, it amounts to glorifying the will of all rather than the general will. If the implications of this pseudo-democratic logic are carried to their conclusion, "prime time" television is the pinnacle of aesthetic value. We lose the right to criticize a bad facticity. Socrates deserved to die; after all, his fate was lawfully determined by democratic vote in which the majority prevailed. He was sort of an oddball anyway; always criticizing, never really fit in.

The argument against "high modernism" fails to take into account the fact that the latter, in its progressively esoteric guises, is merely responding to the socio-historical

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pressures from below, pressures that result in the increasing commodification of the bourgeois cultural public sphere,[3] from which autonomous art seeks to free itself. It should be praised, not penalized, for its efforts, for only in this way does an authentic conception of aesthetic experience survive, i.e., as an experience that transcends the demands for conformity of a society of consumption.

Alas, the argument for the intrinsic benevolence of popular culture, and its latent Adorno-polemic, decomposed before our very eyes. One of the few concrete examples of "viable" mass art invoked was the operatic work of the early Wagner — the demagogue of Bayreuth, who for Nietzsche represented the first "celebrity," bent on self-promotion and duping the masses.[4] No mention here of Adorno's well known critique of the *Führerprinzip* behind Wagner's authority as conductor/composer, nor of his unmasking of the authoritarian implications of the music itself.[5] In the end, ironically, the speaker was driven to rely verbatim on the arguments of his chief antagonist to account for the normalization of "new music" in the 1950s.[6]

The "postmodern" position proves to be both loathsome and self-contradictory, ultimately confirming the suspicion that although it masquerades under a "hipper-than-thou" guise, postmodernism in both theory (i.e., "decon") and the arts (Cage and Burroughs were mentioned) conceals a crass ethic of adjustment *vis-à-vis* the dynamics of late capitalism. In a post-Nietzschean world that is beyond good and evil, it makes no sense to assume any determinate value standpoint or normative position from which to criticize contemporary forms of domination; for such standpoints and frameworks themselves are merely expressions of their own self-serving, particularistic "will to power." Hence, this position ultimately attempts (and in this domain it succeeds, in my estimation) to deprive itself of the very ground on which it stands. Any "positive" position is too reminiscent of the logocentric demons to be exorcised. Consequently, one must learn to love the status quo, since all coherent standpoints capable of calling it into question have been *a priori* undermined and rejected.

Were I to attempt to paraphrase the postmodernist position, my credibility would be extremely suspect. Hence, I will rely on citations. The speaker is frank enough to admit that postmodernist culture is a "double-edged sword"; in its emphasis on the free play of textual signifiers, there is no guarantee (as with the avant-garde of old) that an emancipatory effect will follow. But it seems clear that the contemporary hope for emancipation (or whatever one wants to call it) somehow rests with the free play of the postmodernist compositions:

"Yet where many see an omnipresent threat in the forms of late-capitalist (or Soviet state-capitalist) society, others, like Cage, glory in the emergence of a new world order, one which fosters individual, anarchic loci of play. That is the technological order, the multi-national system of 'utilities' which are based on the rational principles of efficiency and thus will make all contemporary forms of political formation obsolete. Here is a new model of significant social change and future development, one that is fostering a new avant-garde. But it is also one in which there are no actants, no privileged visionary revolutionaries, no socially antagonistic rebels. Rather, we encounter what I believe Ihab Hassan has called a techno-arcadian spirit. Expressed

3. Cf. Habermas' "classical" discussion of these tendencies in *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Neuwied, 1962).
4. Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner* (New York, 1967).
5. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner* (London, 1981).
6. Cf. Adorno, "Das Altern der neuen Musik," in *Dissonanzen* (Göttingen, 1956), pp. 136-159.

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most fully by John Cage (see his *For the Birds*), this is an idealization of the transforming powers of science and technology to bring modern society into tune with the natural rhythms and sustaining virtues of the ecosphere, rhythms which are 'naturally' efficient and thus not threatened by the ideal forms of technology. By the inherent rationality and efficiency of science, Cage and Buckminster Fuller inform us, technology will master its current masters; the principles of greed and exploitation that govern business will be shown to be inefficient and self-destructive. . . .

"At the heart of [Cage's] social hopes is a belief in a fortuitous balance between individual liberty and a benign social engineering [sic] that must evolve from the internal principles of the economic and political order which currently exists. Traditional oppositional politics, in fact, will restrict the individual to a rigid and inadequate concept of authenticity and will, furthermore, retard the necessary evolution of the social system. Thus in Cage's book *A Year from Monday*, we note that his diary passages are entitled 'How to Improve the World (You Will Only Make Matters Worse).' "[7]

This quote is so priceless that I hesitate to defile it with commentary. I will therefore merely cite the response to these ideas by Russell Berman, who observed, with the best one-liner of the conference: "If the axis of the original avant-garde was New York-Paris-Berlin, the axis of the postmodernist avant-garde seems to be New Haven-Santiago-Johannesburg."

In fairness to the deconstructionist position, it must be remarked that the audience was later treated to a bravura "close-reading" of the apparently benign yet ideologically charged constitution of the "other" — Third World women — in some seemingly marginal texts from the world of American pop fashion commentary. Yet, in this form, deconstruction became indistinguishable at times from good old-fashioned Marxist *Ideologiekritik* (which definitely has its place). The presentation concluded (*à la* Jameson) with the obligatory references to multinational corporations (or as the speaker herself confessed, the talk turned into an Economics 101 lecture). How the two halves of the performance were to be reconciled remained unclear. Certainly the late capitalist infrastructure was not to serve as a new bedrock of "referentiality" — in terms of which the ideological signifiers of marginal discourses could be reinscribed and thereby demystified. Yet, if the connection between the two spheres was not "orthodox Marxist causal," or even "necessary," one is at a loss to explain precisely what relationship between them was intended.

One additional problem remained disappointingly undefined: What is the status of the "other" (in this case, women of the Third World) within this framework. The speaker herself acknowledged the difficulty denying that the "other" was somehow a privileged, sacrosanct entity. Yet, as a result of the tenor of the discourse itself, this was a conclusion at which many people had arrived. The relationship between "other" and (for want of a better phrase) "non-other" needed to be specified in greater detail. If the "other" is not merely *metaphorically* constituted by the "non-other" — or the organizing powers of late capitalist domination — but is to a great extent *actually* so constituted, the "other" would be privileged only negatively; it would be the entity on which all the ills of the current world system are projected, but it does not necessarily follow that this has an emancipatory "essence." This is the same problem Marx ran up against in attempting erroneously to deduce the revolutionary essence of the proletariat from the negative fact that it embodied all the ills of the capitalist system. Marx was wrong both at the empirical and analytical levels. Forms of domination can never be so completely

7. Charles Russell, "Anarchism, the Avant-garde and Postmodernism," Conference on "After the Avant-Garde," Houston, Texas, March 6-9, 1985.

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localized; and negative virtues, such as being the repository of all of society's evils, don't translate with *necessity* into positive virtues — the proletariat, the "universal other" of capital, as "universal class."

Some of the same conceptual shortcomings marred efforts to identify the cultural "breakthroughs" of a postmodern era with "politically acceptable" content. The attempt to subjugate art to the political sphere has met with such disasters in this century — from Proletkult, to Brecht of the *Lehrstücke,* to Zhdanov — that the entire conception seems problematical. The whole idea suggests that in the last analysis it is the Bureau of Agitation and Propaganda that is the judge of the "correctness" of works of art. Why bother insisting on "works of art" at all, when such a perspective makes them ontologically superfluous as works of art inasmuch as their political function and tendency are what matter most? Art is degraded to the level of an obsequious handmaiden to the imperatives of the political sphere. This overlooks the historical mandate of the aesthetic realm in the modern era, which is usually identified by the category of aesthetic autonomy. To be sure, even autonomous works of art are related to the socio-historical matrix from which they emerge. The difference lies in the fact that their content does not evaporate in the moment of reception — in the *effect* they have upon the recipient. "Political content" surfaces in a much less narrow or immediately pragmatic sense; it assaults conventional modes of perception, taste, values, and attitudes — all of which remain irreducible to "political content" in the narrow sense. Moreover, to the extent that such works of art shun the guises of outright propaganda and indoctrination, they presuppose a measure of autonomy on the part of the recipient, who, for more brazenly "committed" works of "art," is degraded to the level of a *tabula rasa* of ideology planners and engineers. In sum, the "realm of freedom" cannot be brought about with deterministic certitude.

The upshot of the call for politically committed art is the abstract negation of autonomous art, which is conflated naively with "bad" bourgeois heritage to be annihilated. Here, the pitfalls of vulgar left-wing political theory[8] — civil society and the indispensable formal freedoms contained therein are perceived merely as "obstacles" to political liberation, which must be surmounted — coincide with those of "engaged" left-wing aesthetic theory, insofar as both favor the *suppression* rather than the dialectical sublation of the bourgeois heritage. This is a logic that leads ultimately to Gulag and Zhdanov.

When one conference proponent of de-autonomization was asked for contemporary instances of such politically progressive art, he feebly invoked "black and women's art" — a suggestion that raises a host of questions that cannot be answered in terms of an aesthetics of commitment alone. Is *all* black and women's art politically progressive? One would presume not. Is it "correct" political content alone that makes such works progressive? Again the answer would be negative. Correct "tendency" is perfectly compatible with an artistic travesty. If this is the case, one must have recourse again to some purely *aesthetic* criteria to differentiate acceptable works from the unacceptable. Yet, this implies the primacy of aesthetic over political criteria in questions of artistic valuation; or if not their primacy, at least their indispensability. Moreover, I would contend that developments in the fields of black and women's art over the last 20 years show that the outstanding examples are perfectly consistent with the doctrine of aesthetic autonomy (this seems especially true of literature). Black and women's art

8. For a superb discussion of the traditional Marxist underestimation of the sphere of civil society, see Jean Cohen, *Class and Civil Society: The Limits of Marxian Critical Theory* (Amherst, 1982).

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seems to be ipso facto political, merely by virtue of the fact that it thematizes black's and women's problems, which are political in nature. Yet, this fact no more renders such works of art *non-autonomous* than, say, Beaumarchais's *The Marriage of Figaro*. In both cases, what renders the works of art valuable is less the fact that they are politically "correct" than that they have elevated certain experiential problems to a pitch of clarity, poignancy, and precision in a manner that is irreducible to the criterion of political efficacity alone.

The presentation on the "Peace Movement and the Avant-Garde" by Russell Berman went against the grain of the conference in its radical rejection of avant-gardist logic in both the political and artistic spheres. The Peace Movement is an interesting case. Prima facie, its pacifist values have little in common with the strident militarism that characterizes so much of the rhetoric of the historical avant-garde (the term avant-garde itself was originally derived from the realm of military strategy). Yet, as Berman argued, if one takes a closer look, the Peace Movement ends up recapitulating vanguard tendencies in several crucial respects. For one, it is claimed that peace is an absolute value, before which all other ends pale in significance — a claim that is both undemocratic and untrue: one values not "mere" life, but the "good life," and the latter is undoubtedly something worth fighting for.[9] By embracing peace as a Weberian "ultimate end," the logic of the Peace Movement attempts to relativize all other value claims into submission — whence its vanguardism. Peace as an ultimate end accounts for the movement's bad faith *vis-à-vis* official democratic — parliamentary — procedures: the exclusivity of *its* goal purportedly legitimates disrespect for such bourgeois conventions (this is especially true of German Green attitudes toward parliamentary democracy, which reproduce verbatim the opportunistic sentiments of the old KPD). In the end, a concerted attempt is made to "guilt-trip" both followers and non-followers into submission through repeated alarmist prognoses of cataclysm and catastrophe. An elite cadre of movement activists re-emerges. "Yet the vanguardist structure (again) ensures the failure of the radical movement because of the reproduction of the heteronomy of followers and leaders" (Berman).

In his attempt to account for the "cultural leg" of the Revolutions of 1848, Marx observed that "traditions of dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living." Never has this claim been truer than when linked to aspects of the socialist legacy today. Only the concerted effort at a wholesale revaluation of this tradition — after the model of Bloch's "warm current" Marxists and the Frankfurt School — would permit a bona fide emancipation from this legacy and its frequently disastrous implications for the domains of both cultural and political theory. Above all, what should give pause for thought is the fact that the failures of socialism have been greatest in those parts of the world where it has been most successful.

9. For a fuller elaboration of this argument, see Agnes Heller and Ferenc Feher, "From Red to Green," *Telos*, 59 (Spring 1984), pp. 35-44.

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STANDING UP TO THE LIE*

by Jacques Rupnik

The crushing of Prague Spring in August of 1968 meant not only the failure of the hope of reforming a communist system from within the party and by using its own ideology; it also meant the death of Marxism in central Europe. In Kolakowski's words, from that time on, communism "was no longer an intellectual problem; it was simply a problem of power."[1] But although communist ideology may be no longer an intellectual problem, power has now become a problem that must be confronted.

One of the crucial developments of the last 15 years is that, alongside the dissidence in the East has arisen the construction of "the other Europe," an independent political orientation which is caught up neither in the Marxist reformism of the 60s nor in the weight of nationalist ideology. This renewal of political thought is naturally marked by a diversity of approaches and intellectual debts. Yet, it is unified by a common proposition of an original approach to the question of totalitarianism.

Western political science in the 50s had defined totalitarianism by criteria such as the presence of a charismatic leader, mass terror, or ideological mobilization. Once these characteristics were left behind by Khrushchev's reformism and by the pragmatic conservatism of the Brezhnev and Andropov years, the Sovietologists quickly gave up on the concept of totalitarianism, as if it were a scarcely scientific product of the Cold War. Yet it was at just this moment that the independent thinkers of Central Europe rediscovered the concept. This rediscovery took place outside the academic debate. More important, it considers itself to be a redefinition of the term. Following Orwell and Arendt rather than political science, it is at once a reflection on the essence of the totalitarian phenomenon and a consideration of the changing realities of the communist system, especially the new non-violent mechanisms of social control.[2] This gives rise to a reflection about lies and totalitarian language, as well as to analyses of the new kinds of relation between the state and society in the era of "tired totalitarianism."

Although these concerns are shared by the majority of the *samizdat* texts of the last decade, we must recall that these works emerge from different approaches and concerns which often reflect the different situation of each country as well as the specificity of their political cultures.

Nothing illustrates better the chasm that separates the reflection on totalitarianism in central Europe and in Soviet Russia than the difference between the theory of Solzhenitsyn and his inverted mirror, Zinoviev.[3] Or, again, it is no accident that the Poles stress the notion of 'civil society,' the Hungarians, that of the market economy, while the Czechs accent their link to Western culture. In other words, these are three complementary aspects of their European and Western heritage which are, each of them, obstacles to the ambition of totalitarian power. Whereas, with the Russians, we

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1. Leszek Kolakowski, *The Main Currents of Marxism* (Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 467.
2. Cf. Milan Simecka's essay on Orwell in the first issue of *La Lettre internationale.*
3. Cf. the interview of Zinoviev and George Urban, first printed in *Encounter* in English, reprinted in *La Lettre internationale*, No. 3 (Winter, 1984-85). — *Translator's note.*

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have writers of genius who, when they are forced to think about politics, become prophets of despair who blame their misery sometimes on the hated West, sometimes on a Sovietized people who, in the last analysis, have received only what they deserve.

Whereas the Polish opposition sees totalitarianism as merely a system imposed from the outside by the force of the Big Brother in the East, the Czechs have begun an interesting investigation of the endogenous springs of totalitarianism. They have pursued two lines of questioning, the one concerning the specificity of central Europe as revealing the moral and intellectual crisis of Europe, the other concerning the nature of democracy itself.

Patocka, following Husserl, has probed the moral and intellectual crisis of Europe whose origins he sees in the triumph of an impersonal rationality which he opposes to the subjective universality of the concrete life-world (*Lebenswelt*). And, in the same way that, for Patocka, Galileo founded natural science on a mathematization of the universe, so — according to one of Patocka's most brilliant disciples, V. Belohradsky[4] — did Machiavelli reduce politics to a technology of power. From this point of view, modern political thought from Machiavelli to Weber converges in the autonomization of a state whose functions obey a rationality which is beyond conscience. Once legitimacy is based on or conflated with a rational and bureaucratic legalism, the absorption of legitimacy and of conscience by the institution or by the appparatus is on the agenda. This theme of the "law" which is empty of any "human sense" and is thus, in the last resort, absurd, can be found throughout the literature of central Europe since the beginning of the century. It is no accident that one finds in Kafka, Musil, Broch or Roth — that is, between Vienna and Prague — the most brilliant anticipations of the totalizing possibilities of impersonal rationality. And, for certain authors, there is a great temptation to see in socialism — as imaginary and then as "realized" — the conclusion of a long march of modern state power toward "transparence" and toward "innocence."

The reflection on the totalitarian phenomenon here joins a critique of the statism which made central European societies vulnerable to the grasp of communism. This is why one finds among the dissidents a theory which, sometimes, appears to be the continuation of that of Hayek and von Mises. This is no accident. These two "libertarians" had begun their critique of the bureaucracy and of modern statism from its Austrian incarnation, of which several of the states which are today in the Soviet bloc are the heirs. After 40 years of communist government in Czechoslovakia there has emerged today a "neo-liberal" current which had been nearly nonexistent during the first republic and the inter-war years.

The experience of the first republic led by Masaryk, as well as the thought of this philosopher who became head of state, remain an essential point of reference for those who, in Prague, are trying to understand democracy and totalitarianism.[5] The author of a recent *samizdat* text declares himself ironically to be a "reactionary," in the sense that he wishes to see a restauration of the Old Regime — that is, democracy. Before knowing what kind of socialism is desirable, he argues, we should first reestablish what we previously had, that is, parliamentary democracy. The debate about socialism makes sense only as the further development of democracy, not vice versa. This reference to Masarykian democracy is not a dreamy look backward in the *samzdat*

4. V. Belohrdsky, "Drize eschatologie neosobnosti" (Crisis of the eschatology of impersonality), 1982.

5. Cf. Marc Leboucher, "Thomas Masaryk et la démocratie," in *Esprit* (July-August 1984).

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literature from Czechoslovakia — as witness the (*samizdat* volume) *Mélanges in honor of T.G. Masaryk* published in 1980 for the 130th year of his birth.

That volume of some 800 pages brought together essays representing all the currents in the "parallel culture" of Czechoslovakia. It is at once a return to the sources and a critical reflection on the philosophical and political heritage of Masaryk.[6] The question that is central to today's debates is to understand (beyond considerations of external affairs which, in the last resort, "overdetermine" the internal situation) the links in the transition from democracy to totalitarianism: how, after the last war, was a communist system introduced into a country which lies in the Soviet zone but which did not have red army troops on its territory. How could the system be introduced without any serious resistance from the "democratic forces"?

In other words, the problem is that of Benes — at once the "heir" of Masaryk and the destroyer of democracy. From that point of view, the Prague coup is not a true turning point but rather the climax of a process of crisis and decomposition of a democracy of the Western type. That, in a word, is the provocative thesis which a certain number of historians and "journalists" of the Czech *samizdat* have proposed for the past few years. They have offered a critical analysis of Czech developments that is analogous, *mutatis mutandis*, to what Orphüls presented for the French in *The Sorrow and the Pity*. "The Nazi occupation was accepted by the nation without resistance in order to preserve its national identity; in fact, this acceptance robbed it of its identity," writes the historian, Pribram. Masaryk had said that a democracy can survive only so long as it is ready to fight for the ideas that had founded it.

The failure at Munich prepared, in a sense, that of 1948. The alliance of Benes and the communists was made under the double symbolism of formal continuity with the Masarykian heritage and with the slogan, "So that Munich can never again occur." But this alliance brought three crucial breaks with the Masarykian democracy:

1) At the same time that Benes was arguing the notion that Czechoslovakia could be a bridge between the East and the West (a thesis that Masaryk had rejected already at the end of the 19th century), he had in fact told Stalin and Molotov, in their discussions in Moscow in 1943, that Czechoslovakia would voluntarily place itself in the Soviet sphere of influence as the only way to guarantee its territorial integrity. At the same time, Benes formulated also a convergence theory *avant la lettre*: The USSR was seen as having become, during the war, the good old Russia which can only eventually but inevitably become democratic whereas the capitalist West, which had emerged from its economic crisis by means of a war, could only evolve toward socialism.

2) In the name of the same principle of the elimination of the causes of the failure of democracy at Munich, the two largest interwar parties in Czechoslovakia were banned. They were accused by Benes of having been "munichois." By restricting the number of political parties (not to speak of the absorption of the workers councils by the one trade union) the field of democracy was narrowed.

3) The historian J. Mlynarik has questioned the deeper implications of the transfer out of Czechoslovakia of populations (especially German) after the war. (One could ask the same question for Poland.) In the 20th century, transfers of national minorities have been the work of the great totalitarian powers: Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. By depriving the German minority of its civil rights in the name of "collective guilt," the restored democratic Czechoslovakia could be said to have succumbed to

6. Besides this volume, which has not been translated into French, one should note the English volume, *T.G. Masaryk in Perspective, Comments and Criticisms* (New York, 1981).

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the terrifying logic that had been begun by its two neighbors and successive occupying forces. Between 1945 and 1948 Benes and the Czech politicians compensated for their impotence at Munich. By winning the battles of the past they lost those of the present and the future.

This devastating verdict for those who think of themselves as the heirs of Masaryk's democracy is not an act of self-flagellation along the lines of [J.-F. Revel's] theme of "how democracies end." The issue for the historians and philosophers of the post-war generation is to ask more basic questions concerning the foundations of democracy and of its crises in the 20th century — for these questions are also those of Europe.

LA LETTRE INTERNATIONALE

by Dick Howard

La Lettre internationale is a new, international journal, edited by Antonin Liehm in French (with Paul Noirot) and in Italian (with Federico Coen).[1] German and Spanish editions are in the planning stages. Liehm is known not only as a film critic, social thinker and political commentator;[2] he is also the former editor of *Literarny Listy*, the journal of the Czech writers' union that was one of the important elements in the creation of the Prague Spring of 1968. *Listy* was a cultural organ that played a political role without abandoning its primary mission.

Small countries, Liehm explains, cannot afford parochialism. They are open necessarily to the outside world, from whose offerings they must know how to pick and choose. They do not have the luxury of purity; they cannot indulge their fantasies of autonomy. What for the intelligentsia of the bigger nations is perhaps "bourgeois" or a "sell-out" to popularity or publicity cannot be written off — even when the charge is not of itself false.[3] The result is that small cultures, when allowed freedom, are cosmopolitan.

La Lettre Internationale is in fact more European than international. The four issues published thus far contain contributions from the East and the West, the North and

1. The French edition can be obtained from La Lettre internationale, 14-16, rue des Petits-Hôtels, 75010 Paris; the Italian edition from Lettera internazionale, via del Colosseo 61, 00814 Roma.

2. Liehm is the author of *The Politics of Culture* (New York, 1968); *Closely Watched Films: The Czechoslovak Experience* (White Plains, 1974); *The Milos Forman Stories* (White Plains, 1975); *The Most Imprtant Art: Eastern European Films after 1945* (Berkeley, 1977); *The Most Important Art: Soviet and Eastern European Film after 1945* (Berkeley, 1980); and *The Writing on the Wall: An Anthology of Contemporary Czech Literature* (Princeton, 1983).

3. The journal reprints from various sources, including — in the case of the East — unpublished ones. American readers will find essays taken from *The New York Review of Books, The New York Times Magazine, The New York Times, The International Herald-Tribune, The New Yorker,* and *Encounter.* The American reader may wonder — as this one did — at some of the choices, but the context puts the pieces in a different light from the original source. *La Lettre internationale* is not an organ of truth; it is a place for questioning and questions, for the interesting and the well written; it is where one culture can meet another such that each asks the other, what does it mean to be well informed?

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the South of Europe. (The only article dealing with Latin America has treated the situation of intellectuals in the region in a more journalistic vein; Nadine Gordimer contributed one essay on South Africa along with a "Father's Letter" to Franz Kafka.) The contents range from the literary to the political, passing through the domains of sociology and fiction. The writings are sometimes short, sometimes extended; poetry and plays join the short story and the interview as modes of exposition.

Liehm's editorial principles are: Is it interesting? Is it well written? He does not, as a rule, commission works; he takes what he finds, groups it, and prints it. The groupings may be topical — Kafka, Orwell from the East and the West, 40 Years since the War's End, or the problems of Modernism. Not everything is grouped — Darnton on Mother Goose, Konrad or Kundera on the writer, the astonishing interview with Zinoviev. Every reader will know by name some or many of the authors, but one will find always a new face, not to speak of new ideas.

English speakers will know Jan Kott, Philip Roth, John Berger, Roger Shattuck, Timothy Garton Ash or Robert Hughes, but do they know Bruce Chatwin, David Edgar or Christopher Hampton? Readers of *Telos* will know Enzensberger, Kosik, Konrad, and Bobbio, but do they know Semprun, Simecka, Goytisolo, Grusa, Sciascia, or Havel? Would such readers really read Helmut Schmidt, Stanley Hoffmann, Irving Howe, John Kenneth Galbraith or even Alan Riding of *The New York Times* in a different context? Especially if that context included such literary essayists as Max Frisch, Antonio Suara, Vercors, Peter Schneider or Günther Kunert?

When the first issue of *La Lettre internationale* appeared in France, most were impressed, but some wondered whether Liehm could keep up the pace. Was there really enough material "out there"? The French can be parochial.

Now the fifth issue has just appeared, and the journal is getting better each time. The reader gets used to its somewhat unusual format (11 x 14½ inches) and its futuristic layout. And this reader, at least, is eagerly waiting for the next issues.

BETWEEN REDUCTIONISM AND RELATIVISM: SOVIET SOCIETY AS A WORLD SYSTEM

by Andrew Arato

Thirty or even fifty years ago, the apology on the Left for the Soviet Union was direct. Today no one can read what the Webbs wrote in the '30s or what Sartre wrote in the early '50s without laughing, though we should recall the seriousness of the crimes they managed to represent — and, for the relevant audience, successfully. We have come a long way from all that, or so it seems. Actually, left-wing writing these days on the whole is still apologetic — even if in indirect forms. Of the two major types of exercises in mystification, the one postulates an essential parallelism between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. as forms of domination, as centers of imperial systems, in one recent version as "exterminist" social formations. The other, while recognizing the dictatorial character of the Soviet Union and the essential difference between Western and Eastern Europe as areas of superpower penetration, nevertheless stresses the political and military weakness and/or conservatism of the Soviet bloc and places all the blame for all international dangers and tensions on the West and specifically the U.S. To be sure, neither

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of these doctrines in their usual, vulgar forms has had much success in *Telos*, which has been truly exceptional in its critical treatment of Soviet-type societies. It is all the more disturbing to see their traces in the recent exchange between Luke and Zaslavsky, who otherwise say much that is valuable for a full understanding of Soviet society.[1]

Residual Marxian reductionism disguised as world systems analysis versus equally residual Russian nationalism behind supposedly objective, value-free, somewhat relativistic analysis: these are the terms of the debate. If good points are made on both sides, this is easy enough, because one of the basic assumptions of each leads to patent absurdities. On the one hand, it is simply impossible to understand the internal workings of the Soviet Union, its imperial system and its military-political position in the world *state* system on the basis of an economistic world's system analysis. It is, however, absurd from the viewpoint of any criterion other than military to consider Soviet-type societies and late capitalist ones to be on the same level of development (be it economic, political, normative, or any other form of development). Not that either of the positions lacks a grain of truth. In relation to military-political competition, *there is rough equality* in a *single system* of states, and the really open question is not only the relationship of this system revolving around the superpowers with the world economic system, but especially that of both to the internal functioning of the Soviet imperialism as well as the Western alliance system. These questions cannot even be raised from Luke's point of view because, following Wallerstein and his school, he reduces the four systems (the two global and the two sectoral ones) to a single one. While these questions can be (and in part are) raised by Zaslavsky, they cannot be answered on his assumption of two largely parallel, if structurally different, forms of industrial society. This view, even when coupled to the important reservation concerning two different organizing principles of the two systems — the one political and the other economic —, only occludes the continuity of the U.S.S.R. with historical, land-based empires involving a fundamentally different relationship of the military to the structure of power than exists in the United States.[2] Luke, to be sure, does note the world imperial character of the U.S.S.R.[3] but treats it (in spite of what he says) as a "small empire" rather than a "world empire," using Wallerstein's terms. The reason is obvious: in this categorial framework, a "small empire" can be a part of a world economic system; a "world empire" cannot be because it is by definition an alternative and competing type of world system.[4] It may

1. See Luke's contribution to "Review Symposium on Soviet-Type Societies," *Telos* 60 (Summer 1984), hereafter "Symposium"; Zaslavsky, "Soviet Society and the World System," *Telos* 62 (Winter 1984-85), hereafter "Soviet Society"; and Luke, "On the Nature of Soviet Society," in this issue of *Telos*, hereafter "Nature."

2. See Zaslavsky's manuscript "The Soviet 'Military-Industrial Complex' and the Problem of the Conversion of a Military into a Civilian Economy," which gives away the essential points to Castoriadis (cf. *Devant la guerre* [Fayard, 1981]) on the question of closed enterprises and their relation to a military sub-society. See also the exchange between Piccone and Zaslavsky and Castoriadis, *Telos* 53 (Fall 1983).

3. "Nature," p. 193.

4. Luke, who does not realize that using the term "world empire" actually concedes Zaslavsky's case, also mistakes the latter's use of the easily mistakable Wallersteinian term "world system" for "world economy." Zaslavsky does not claim that the U.S.S.R. has its own "world economy," but only its "world system" — a genus that has two particulars included under it by Wallerstein: "world economy" and "world empire." Cf. "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis" in *The Capitalist World Economy* (London, 1979), pp. 5-6. Logically, Zaslavsky should say that the U.S.S.R. has a world empire, a conclusion he won't draw, supposedly because the Soviet Union is an industrial society (an issue irrelevant from the Wallersteinian perspective). That there may be, however, some definite political purpose behind not using the term is indicated by Zaslavsky's essay, "The Ethnic Question in

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be that betwen them, Luke and Zaslavsky have many of the elements of a fruitful starting point for the study of the U.S.S.R. in the world. Their respective paradigms, however, cannot be simply added up. Only a different one based on a more complex systems approach than Wallerstein's and a more differentiated theory of development than Zaslavsky's, distinguishing between economic, political, military and normative levels, could include what is right in the two chains of argument.

Since it cannot be the task in a short comment to supply such an alternative paradigm, an immanent criticism of the two approaches in question will have to suffice. Let us take the two in turn. It it obviously true that the U.S.S.R. participates in a world economy in which it sells raw materials to the West, some finished goods (above all, weapons) to some unfortunate Third World countries, and buys a great deal of food and some sophisticated technologies from the West. It is also obviously true that it is one of the two superpowers of a world system of states rather different than the truly multipolar state system up to the end of World War II. The Wallersteinian world systems approach prejudges the relationship of these two "facts" and their combined effect on the internal system of the Soviet Union and its bloc. It is all a matter of the strength of explanatory claims. If the world (economic) system approach, focusing on the capitalist world economy, were used only to trace the role of the Soviet Union in this world economy as a relatively but not overwhelmingly important unit, the margin of error would be small. But the theory has always involved far stronger claims.[5] On the basis of a simple-minded Marxian one-to-one relation of political-military and economic power, Wallerstein has recently asserted, for example, that the really important conflicts of the world are among the core capitalist states and that the East-West conflict is increasingly a function of competition between the United States and Western Europe and Japan. Luke supports this claim without even knowing the relevant Wallerstein article[6] and without warning translates "great economic and therefore [sic] political threat" presented by Japan and Western Europe to the United States as "the major threat . . . economically and technologically."[7] Despite Luke's denials and subterfuge, this reduction of politics to economics rightly makes Zaslavsky furious.

Luke thinks that it is enough to assert[8] that in the Wallerstein model, state coercion and economic power work hand in hand to appropriate the surplus product. What he does not see is that the economistic definition of the goal precludes an independent discovery of a genuine political dynamic. The goal of state power may be and generally is its own aggrandizement. However, this may or may not take economic forms. The U.S.S.R. is a case when it usually does not; the Soviets appropriate an economic surplus where they have no politial power (grain trade) and waste economic resources without hope of return where they do (Cuba, Afghanistan).

Unfortunately, Luke is at times more crude than Wallerstein in his attempt to apply the world systems approach. He claims that a (falsely) supposed "streamlining of

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the U.S.S.R.," *The Neo-Stalinist State* (New York, 1982), which dissolves the issue of empire in the false alternative that the U.S.S.R. is either a unitary nation state or a genuine federation. Of course, it is neither!

5. Cf. Wallerstein, "Rise and Future Development," *op.cit.*, p. 21, echoed by Luke throughout his article in the "Symposium." Cf. also Wallerstein, "Semi-Peripheral Countries and the Contemporary World Crisis," in *The Capitalist World Economy, op.cit.*, pp. 115-116.

6. He repeats (note 33 of "Nature") the inadvertent miscitation in Zaslavsky's "Soviet Society," p. 165. The quoted passage is, however, not in *World System* II, p. 125, but in "Friends as Foes," *Foreign Policy* (Fall 1980), p. 125.

7. "Symposium," p. 23.

8. "Nature," p. 192.

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hyper-rational command economies" and an (equally falsely) postulated "organization of consensus" is a function in Soviet-type societies (about which he apparently knows very little) of the "U.S.S.R.'s and Eastern Europe's dependent development as upwardly mobile, semi-peripheral economies in the world economic system."[9] Wallerstein only applied such reasoning to a (falsely) expected technocracy that after all would have been more conceivably a function of world economic pressures.[10] Notwithstanding this false prediction by his master, Luke applies the identical explanation to the opposite outcome: now Western economic input becomes "the material basis of the neo-Stalinist state."[11] involving the intensification of police repression and the revival of the Stalin cult.[12] Zaslavsky's book, *The Neo-Stalinist State*, for one, explained those phenomena well enough without a world system hypothesis. But this is not enough for Luke, who also seems to consider the Khrushchevian thaw to be a function of the "reintegration" of the U.S.S.R. into the world economy.[13]

Such explanations of heterogenous outcomes by always the same explanatory elements involve deep logical flaws, but more is at stake than Luke's formal logical errors. His whole train of thought is wrong-headed. The Soviet Union has not only a structure historically *sui generis* (a point confirmed but marginalized by Luke) but this specificity is a sufficiently important one to *change* the structure of the world itself. To treat it as a mere instance of patterns already existing since the 16th century is plainly absurd. Moreover, the Soviet bloc is emphatically not a part of single world structure of the division of labor: the immense majority of its products and forms of labor power do not enter into world circulation at all. Even in energy it is not one of the really major world suppliers. Its prices have little to do with world prices. In fact, it does not even have homogeneous prices that can be converted in international terms. As Zaslavsky in effect argued, the Soviet Union is indeed capable of carefully controlled participation in the world market that does not expose its internal social structure to political *or* economic pressures.[14] In effect, it participates in order to avoid genuine participation, in order to continue to uncouple itself from the West. The point is not simply, as Luke would say, that the Soviet Union differs from a Third World supplier of raw materials because of the strength of its state, but rather that the definition (inconsistently held in any case)[15] "upwardly mobile semi-peripheral" does not even begin to explore that nature of its presence in the world.

Luke is wrong: the Soviet role in the world system of state is not (as apologists like

9. "Symposium," p. 160.
10. "Semiperipheral Countries," *op.cit.*, pp. 109-112.
11. "Symposium," p. 158.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
14. Here Poland is the one and only case where a strategy outlined by Luke based on modernization through the large-scale importation of Western technology and welfare through borrowing from the West was in fact tried out — with disastrous results. The existing structure simply could not absorb the input without internal reform, which the policy was intended, however, to replace. Interestingly, even in this period the external pressures on Poland were not market or financial ones, but political and cultural ones. Luke also gets the historical sequence wrong: the crisis in Poland came not because Western investments and loans were suddeny stopped, but because the policy totally failed, leading to a stoppage of credits. Cf. "Symposium," p. 159.
15. At times, Wallerstein, by the way, implies that the Soviet Union is a core-capitalist state. Cf. "Semiperipheral Countries," p. 115. The confusion is inherent in his mode of analysis because he alternatively interprets "core" either as a strong market position or as a strong state. The two definitions may not, however, necessarily indicate the same states at all. E.g., Holland in the early 17th century or Japan in the late 20th, having strong market positions but not strong states.

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Andre Gunder Frank imply) a defensive one of a military colossus defending a weak economic position against strong adversaries, but an activist and aggressive role that moves in wherever opportunities present themselves. The activism and the aggression, moreover, have little to do with the improvement of the U.S.S.R.'s position on the world market. If anything, the costs, economically speaking, systematically outweigh the useful results. That the U.S.S.R. should be merely a sub-imperialist power, performing a service on the world market on behalf of the dominant U.S. imperialism — a position maintained by Luke in a joint article with Carl Boggs — is a position not even worthy of serious discussion. Yet just such an absurdity is implied by the Wallersteinian claim that semi-peripheral countries are exploiters and exploited at the same time and the (inconsistent) identification of the Soviet Union as semi-peripheral. The Soviet Union — today, at least — is not an economic exploiter nor is it exploited by anyone.

The paradoxes from the world systems point of view of the Soviet role in the world are easily explained if we realize that for the Soviet Union, participation in the world market or gaining advantages on it is entirely secondary; its aim is not at all what may be the aim of an "upwardly mobile country of the semi-periphery" (in the past Japan, now Brazil, the NIC's, etc.) — i.e., to become a core-capitalist country. To the Soviet Union, the preservation (perhaps expansion) of its imperial position within the bloc is primary, and its preeminent role in the international state system and its rather secondary role in the world economy (in that order) are clearly subordinated to this imperative.

No doubt Luke knows the details of Soviet imperial policy (external and internal). But to the extent he adheres to the analytical framework he adopted (and not for any political reason) he must treat the key phenomena that cannot be coordinated with a position in the world economy as marginal. It is here that his position has apologetic implications (which to his credit he does not draw) which would mean (as they do to Wallerstein) that the main antagonist of movements of liberation everywhere, including East Europe and Afghanistan, for example, is world capitalism rather than a merely subordinate "bureaucratic centralism." Wallerstein, not adverse to quoting "Comrade Kim Il Sung,"[16] has in the past favored even autarchic withdrawal from the world market and has proposed a world socialist government that could easily be confused with a truly world-scale empire to the extent that the autarchic version of Maoism, North Korea, etc., is to be seen as its anticipation in the present, and even more, to the extent he defines "drastic redistribution of the world surplus" — fairly close to his own definition of empire — as the task of anti-systemic movements and a future world government.[17] His whole idea of anti-systemic movements (contrary to the actual facts in East Europe) by focusing on the world system only gives Soviet-type governments (themselves opposed to the world system, at least ideologically) a free ride.[18] Finally, the simple-minded claim (repeated by Luke)[19] that the main dangers of the world today, of nuclear war in particular, are to be chalked up to the world bourgeoisie protecting its position against "upwardly mobile semi-peripheral" competitors reinforces the worst and most internally destructive elements of the peace movement, the various pro-Soviet factions.

The subtly apologetic consequences of Zaslavsky's arguments are more disturbing than these last implications of Wallerstein's dogma, because Zaslavsky is one of the

16. Cf. "Semiperipheral Countries," *op. cit.*, pp. 109-112.

17. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 101, 117-119, and "Rise asnd Future Demise," *op.cit.*, p. 6. It is frustrating that after all the educational work of *Telos* in this area, one of our own editors does not see what the politics of Wallerstein's neo-Marxism is all about.

18. Cf. his forthcoming article in the "Social Movements" issue of *Social Research.*

19. "Nature," p. 194.

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best experts on the Soviet Union, politically and morally a rather unique figure in the whole Russian emigration.[20] It seems, however, that in the epoch of Reagan's "evil empire" rhetoric, Zaslavsky has undergone a paradigm change, apparently motivated by a certain national defensiveness. Zaslavsky used to include in his argument on the nature of Soviet society an evolutionist logic that presupposed the inevitability of reform given the system's economic irrationality. This position was politically respectable if mistaken. In a debate with Castoriadis and elsewhere, he was confronted with the challenge to give "even a rough outline of the 'kind' of reforms having any degree of effectiveness which could be introduced *without* threatening the existing power relations."[21] The theoretical answer to this challenge would have required a more complex theory than the one at Zaslavsky's disposal, one that would allow at least the exploration of the conditions of possibility of the partial uncoupling of the economic sphere from politics and from culture and specify the legitimation conditions required for the avoidance of spillover from a decentralized economy to the other social spheres.[22] Here a general theory of Soviet-type societies may lead one astray, because the conditions of such uncoupling and the avoidance of such a spillover may be far more easily attained in some of the Western periphery of the Soviet empire than in its core. In effect, the military-political guarantees of an unreformed core are at the moment the conditions of possibility of a reluctant and partial reformism in some of the peripheries. Without the benefits of such an argument, Zaslavsky seems nevertheless now to accept its conclusions that in the Soviet Union proper genuine reform (of agriculture, for example) would today carry unacceptable political risks.[23] But he does so in a manner that closely resembles the shift of the official Soviet ideology from socialism as the goal of reformism (i.e., Khrushchevism) to "developed socialism" being identical with what is "really existing." In the past, he argued for the need for reform; today he maintains the U.S.S.R. is successfully integrated as it is. It seems that his own earlier reformism was another example of the Western ethnocentrism he now lambasts.

Nevertheless, his own arguments for the full equality of the U.S.S.R. as an industrial society are on the whole weak. There is a grain of truth in them only to the extent that the politico-economic functioning of Soviet-type societies — as Markus's synthesis so brilliantly demonstrates[24] — indeed unfolds according to a different logic. Zaslavsky here follows the Hungarian economist Kornai and his colleagues, defining Soviet-type economies as "economies of shortage," which he admits, after Markus, Heller and Feher, to be "dictatorships over needs." But he gives the Hungarian theories a deeply apologetic turn. To Kornai, an "economy of shortage" may be in a sense modern, but is nevertheless deeply undesirable. The whole point of the various decentralization schemes coming out of the Hungarian economics profession is to break with what they

20. It is absurd to use the contrast of emigré vs. expert that Luke tries to hawk in his reply. Zaslavsky is both an emigré and an expert, and uses both participatory and objective forms of analysis as even a cursory reading of *The Neo-Stalinist State* indicates.

21. Castoriadis, "A Rejoinder," *Telos*, 53 (Fall 1982), p. 196.

22. Cf. my "Critical Sociology and Authoritarian State Socialism," in *Habermas: Critical Debates* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982).

23. "The present leadership seeks to maintain the status quo and to avoid the drastic reforms that are deemed politically dangerous," he says in "Soviet Society," *op.cit.*, p. 163. Elsewhere, reforms are called "uncertain and costly"; *ibid.*, p. 164.

24. Cf. Chapter II of *Dictatorship over Needs* (New York, 1983). Here it would take us too far afield to show that Luke's review of this work is completely inadequate. That he has understood nothing is shown by his (totally incorrect) discovery of a model of corporatist intermediation in it.

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take to be either backwardness or an undesirable version of modernity, to leave "the economy of shortage." None of them believes what Zaslavsky claims — namely, that such a system has "enormous developmental potentials" and shows no signs of economic decline.[25] Furthermore, those who focus on the categories of extensive growth-intensive development categories[26] that can be abstracted from the question of Soviet-type vs. capitalist economies do indeed consider Soviet-type economies a backward version of industrialism. But the issue goes beyond the question of development or underdevelopment. Zaslavsky admits the obvious when he says Soviet-type systems are inferior from the viewpoint of the consumer and that of product quality in general, but claims that these systems are better protected from the over-production of goods and needs. While the latter claim is in fact false,[27] it does raise the question of point of view. These alleged superiorities would be such only from the viewpoint of the regime, not the population, and certainly not the populations subject to Soviet imperial rule. For whom is Zaslavsky speaking? Here the latent bias of supposedly value-free, functionalist sociology for a given status quo shows itself. No wonder that such sociology at one time enjoyed a kind of semi-official existence in the U.S.S.R.

Just as Zaslavsky documents the analytical and factual weaknesses of Luke's paradigm, so Luke is at his best when sniping at Zaslavsky. His argument on the achievements of Soviet industry are to the point, though he should have contested the absurd claim that "central planners can always concentrate enormous human and material resources needed to achieve any particular goal within what is technologically possible at the time."[28] This statement, the first half of which is true, is false because of the general non-transparency of the Soviet economy due to problems of reporting from below and plan bargaining above.[29] The adequate execution of the links between the planners' wishes and the desired result cannot be planned except in the one area where the consumer has sovereignty (i.e., adequate means of control and pressure) — i.e., only the military. Any target can indeed be accomplished if it is decided that no costs count as costs (in this economy of immense waste) and no resources count as constraints (in this "resource-constraint" economy). In general, however, such conditions pertain again only to defense-related sectors, simply because of the given conditions (at least today) of lobby competition.

In his note deflating the absurd Soviet-Japanese comparison, Luke is again on target, though he could have added the obvious: Japan *is* a capitalist country that can absorb what it learns in the field of American technology; the Soviet Union *is not* and cannot. Luke missed another chance when he failed to rebut Zaslavsky's claim that the Soviet Union could do without Western grain supplies — a claim based both on bluff and analytical error. If the Western purchases are adequate substitutes for agricultural reform (which cannot be undertaken politically), then a cutoff for, say, political reasons would pose once again the dilemmas of reform that Zaslavsky desperately tries

25. "Soviet Society," p. 167.

26. To be sure, Piccone and Zaslavsky themselves used these categories only recently: Cf. "The Socio-economic Roots of Re-armament," *Telos* 50 (Winter 1981-82).

27. The overproduction of goods is not incompatible with a shortage economy. On the contrary, the all-pervasive waste (documented by Zaslavsky, explained by Markus) coexisting with shortage involves indeed the simultaneity of overproduction and underconsumption. Needs too are overproduced (especially in the world cultural context in which many of the relevant states do still exist) because even if they are produced slower than in the West the possibility of satisfying them is produced more slowly still.

28. "Soviet Society," p. 160.

29. On this, cf. Markus, *op.cit.*

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to escape. His answer is that an increase of social mobilization and use of internal reserves would allow the Soviet regime to withstand Western pressure. Here is the bluff: "social mobilization" stands for "re-Stalinization." The regime might be able to accomplish this, but only at a great political price, which it itself desperately wants to avoid,[30] and at economic costs that may be greater than any possible economic gain (as they were in the case of Stalin's use of mobilization to increase food supplies). Here is the analytical error: the use of internal reserves stands for a campaign for the elimination of waste that the regime declares every few years but can never even begin to carry out because of structural characteristics of the "economy of shortage." Zaslavsky's own medicine[31] — raising the political price of bread — is the same one that the Polish regime tried in the 1970s and '80s, and its possible consequences would not seem particularly attractive to the Soviet leadership. Again a bluff. What is, however, quite true is that in the age of superpower nuclear parity, the U.S.S.R. cannot be blackmailed by Argentina, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand to undertake measures to endanger its social system. The issue will never come up, however, as long as these countries, full members of the world economic market but marginal in the state system, find it advantageous to sell to an imperial colossus whose world situation is exactly the reverse of theirs.

Nevertheless, the fundamental problems are not thereby made easier for Zaslavsky's analysis. If for political reasons the Soviet Union can only solve the dilemma of need for reform/impossibility of reform by turning to the world market, then important parts of Luke's claims are conceded. If dependence on the world market can be avoided by turning inward, we are back again with the dilemma of reform/non-reform that Zaslavsky (and the Soviets) tried to run away from. How can Zaslavsky postulate both independence from the world market and the tendency to avoid economically needed reforms for political reasons, and at the same time affirm the system's essential "stability" and "viability"? There are two major clues to this puzzle in his analysis and they point beyond his own political and theoretical framework. The first of these tends to *implicitly* concede the empirical beginning point of Castoriadis's analysis, which Zaslavsky once so hotly contested.[32] Quoting a certain V. Emelyanov identified as "one of the major organizers of Soviet R & D" who maintains that "the Soviet economy, science and technology are now at such a high level that the country is able in the shortest period of time to create any new types of armanent," Zaslavsky adds in his own words: "this is not a bluff."[33] Indeed, this is the core of the only argument that Zaslavsky has, aside from the issue of the different logics of the two systems, for their full parallel as modern, industrial societies. The military apparatuses (including space research) of the two superpowers are indeed fully comparable and their international competition on this level is that of equals. The importance of this fact to the world state system cannot be underestimated.

30. This has always been Zaslavsky's position. Cf., e.g., "The Socio-economic Roots of Rearmament," *op.cit.* To be sure, a new form of mobilization may be possible on a purely nationalistic basis, but the consequence of this for the multi-national empire would be also highly unpredictable.

31. "Soviet Society," pp. 163-164.

32. It is another matter that he again misrepresents Castoriadis ("Soviet Society," p. 156). It is simply false that Castoriadis neglected the *interdependence* of the military and non-military sectors of Soviet society. Indeed, the picture painted by Zaslavsky of the symbiosis of efficient private plots and inefficient kolkhozi is precisely the parallel of Castoriadis's analysis of the functional interdependence of parasitic but modern military sector and the rest of the economy.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

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Does its equality on the level of military-industrial development guarantee the stability and viability of the Soviet Union and its bloc?[34] Here the second clue comes into play, though Zaslavsky, through his mystification of Soviet economic performance, avoids elaborating it. He is right that there are (we should add, at least) two world systems, with two different logics — one economic and one political. However, the conscious avoidance of the term *world empire* for the second of these and its identification simply as an *industrial society* stops the analysis dead in its tracks. In the Western based world economic system, there is a genuine plurality of sovereign political units; it has no imperial center. Its plurality of core states is formally of a republican structure even if some have imperial (largely but not only in the economic sense) dependencies that are often dictatorial. Social integration is through independent sovereignties and (however deformed) republican, representative institutions. In the Soviet empire, on the other hand, there is only one sovereign core and it lacks all traces of free political and cultural life to a greater extent than its culturally distinct peripheries — the reverse of the Western system. Nevertheless, Zaslavsky misrepresents the case when he argues that in the Soviet bloc, domination is exercised through local groups and strata allied with the Soviet Union *rather than* through external military force.[35] In fact, both of these are generally of the greatest importance, and the actual or potential use of external force is the more important of the two (and is the ultimate basis of the viability of locally arranged forms of rule). If we are to speak of the stability and viability of this empire, we cannot (as in the case of capitalism) examine its general conditions in each society of the Soviet type. We must rather focus on the integration of its core, which supplies the military glue for holding together the rest.[36] This integration, however, will hardly be based on economic successes, which in any case are no longer even of the modest type of the '70s that still allowed for a gradual improvement of the standard of living. The basis of the integration of the Russian core is a national-imperial form of legitimation and its power is shown by the fact that even the opponents of the regime from Solzhenitsyn to the Medvedevs and even Zaslavsky are not free of it. It remains, however, an open question whether or not this new form of legitimation in the context of decreasing economic and increasing military potential can attain stability and viability in the long run. The question cannot be asbstractly solved, however, without reference to *other* actors in the three systems in which the U.S.S.R. finds itself — in the international state system, the international economy and *within* the Soviet empire itself. In other words, it would be wrong to try to predict the long-run prospects of the Soviet system without, for example, reference to U.S. military policies, Western European economic relations to the U.S.S.R., and movements of opposition in East Central Europe and Afghanistan, but perhaps elsewhere as well.

Zaslavsky's campaign against ethnocentrism seeks to dismiss above all normative or normatively based judgments of the Soviet empire. To be sure, even 'normative development' may not be entirely irrelevant from the viewpoint of the long-run pros-

34. Of course the whole point of Castoriadis's analysis is to show how (1) the military subsociety is an alternative to reform and (2) a new form of legitimation ("national-imperial imaginary") has emerged that is adequate to a stratocracy. I have attempted, in part, to clarify my relationship to his theory in "Perspectives of Democratization in East Central Europe," *Journal of International Affairs* (Winter 1985) and in the "Budapest School and Existing Socialism: The Dictatorship Over Needs," forthcoming in *Theory and Society*.

35. "Soviet Society," p. 167.

36. Not alone of course: it is supported by some segmental interests and by negative national legitimation based on the *raison d'etat* of non-sovereign states.

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pects of a system in the modern world. There is good reason to consider societies that have institutionalized (in however contradictory a fashion) civil society as being on higher normative levels than societies that have suppressed, to whatever extent locally feasible, all traces of independent social life, and which have no institutional space for civil society. Zaslavsky may or may not accept this proposition. However, the structural strains of Soviet-type societies are not independent of this normative problem. Forms of opposition, in the periphery of formidable powers, have constituted themselves precisely around the program of the rebuilding of civil society. And the absence of civil society has important and negative consequences for economic functioning, just as the fear of civil society is behind the inability to institute genuine reforms and much-needed economic reforms that could improve upon this performance.

But again the basic question is whose point of view we are to take. Stability and viability in themselves are not values. From the viewpoint of the democratic opposition in East Europe, to represent the two world systems as parallel in the normative sense and both as viable and unchangeable is prejudicial to the essential questions that are to be tested in practice. On the other hand, to disparage the international importance of the Soviet society and to assign it a place of relative marginality is to say that the real struggles are elsewhere, and these oppositions are at most journalistic curiosities. Even if one is not interested in the fate of East European oppositions, the possibility of effective left policies in the West nevertheless requires a modicum of critical consciousness about the nature of Soviet society. Unfortunately, a theory that reduces the Soviet Union to a semi-peripheral unit in the world market, and another that promotes it to a fully legitimate and on the whole successful version of industrial society, violate not only the critical spirit but common sense as well.

ON THE NATURE OF SOVIET SOCIETY

by Tim Luke

The review symposium on Soviet-type societies in *Telos* 60 sought to address a broad range of important questions raised by Zaslavsky s *The Neo-Stalinist State* and *The Dictatorship Over Needs*, by Feher, Heller and Markus. In response to this, Zaslavsky has taken exception to my brief characterization of Soviet political economy in his article, "Soviet Society and the World Systems Analysis."[1] I had argued that Zaslavsky could improve his case by discussing the position of the USSR in the world economy as well as the role played by East-West trade in reproducing the neo-Stalinist state.[2] Zaslavsky admits this weakness and says such remarks are well-taken. But then he turns around and claims, first, that my viewpoint on the USSR, like that of many "within the Amerian community," is ethnocentric. Then, second, he maintains that world systems theory, in its present form, cannot explain the workings of the Soviet Union in the world system.

1. Victor Zaslavsky, "Soviet Society and the World Systems Analysis," *Telos*, 62 (Winter 1984-85), pp. 155-168.
2. Tim Luke, "Review-Symposium on Soviet-Type Societies," *Telos*, 60 (Summer 1984), pp. 155-161.

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1. **Ethnocentrism**. Regarding this charge, Zaslavsky's presentation actually boomerangs inasmuch as his own "implicit but recognizable cultural attitudes and theoretical assumptions"[3] lead him to misread many of my comments. Remarkably, this misreading begins with his two new axioms — the "Moscow on the Hudson axiom" and the "military colossus axiom" — based on two recent American films. In viewing these films through Soviet rather than American eyes, he totally inverts the *real* "American popular views of Soviet society and its economy."[4] That is, in the US, when people think of Soviet society, they think of the brutal bulllying of average citizens by ruthless officials and police, who work for a highly militarized, exploitative and Draconian regime. Russia is drab, evil, dull. It is food lines, underemployment, KGB raids, spiritual paralysis, and state harassment. Any opportunity, then, to defect to a warm, supportive, and upwardly mobile Third World family in Harlem naturally would be welcomed, in the American consciousness, by any "privileged" Soviet official, scientist, or artist. And to me, at least, if not to Zaslavsky, the "Moscow on the Hudson" image of a Soviet defector leaving his warm and emotional family to enjoy the consumer goodies of Manhattan is not exactly a picture of close-knit, pre-industrial people yearning to be close.

Likewise, in "Red Dawn," most Americans see Russians in the terms that Zaslavsky assigns to the Russians in "Moscow on the Hudson." In other words, the image of Soviet society and its members here is very condescending. The Red Army troops are the same bumbling dupes that the Afghans are sniping at today outside Kabul, except that they are in Colorado. While Zaslavsky saw the troops of a military colossus armed to the teeth and transforming the Rocky Mountains into a people's democracy, the film actually portrays scores and scores of dumb Russian conscripts being annihilated by a handful of average American high school boys and girls in ambush after ambush. This image is hardly that of a "military colossus."

So, Zaslavsky has misconstrued both the American popular consciousness and Soviet-bashing American movies. Where Americans see cold, manipulative people grasping at a chance to live in the Big Apple even if it means never seeing their homesoil and loved ones again, Zaslavsky sees the traditional image of Russian family life: close and warm, supportive and loving, as romanticized by the intelligentsia. And where Americans see incompetent, stupid Red Army troopers, Zaslavsky sees elite regiments methodically imposing Soviet hegemony on the humiliated bourgeois hedonists of middle America.

Given Zaslavsky's own ethnocentric misreading of the cinematic texts that underpin his clever axioms for dismissing the viewpoint of the "American academic community," it is clear that the ethnocentric shoe he slips on my foot also fits his. Likewise, in elaborating Zaslavsky's implicit metaphors, one senses that his arguments verge on "mirror-imaging" in order to neutralize the insidious effects of his two cinematic axioms on America's popular consciousness. Instead of a "Moscow on the Hudson" USSR, populated by warm, emotional, pre-industrial people in an obsolete, "sunset" economy, Zaslavsky presents a picture of cool, calculating, ultra-modern individuals working in an up-to-date "sunrise" economy. The USSR is full of diverse, leading-edge workers waiting to be mobilized in technological storming. Even while coping with the chaos of their disorganized *but* complex society, like man-made congestion, pollution, and overdevelopment, these people can fulfill the latest military needs "in the shortest

3. Zaslavsky, p. 155.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

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period of time,"[5] making major innovations and technical breakthroughs to boot. Outsiders may deride these strange, confident people for their "qualitatively different" way of life, but, in a pinch, this state-of-the-art system can focus "enormous human and material resources needed to achieve any particular goal within what is technologically possible at the time."[6]

Similarly, in an interesting display of the traditional Soviet (and Russian) inferiority complex, Zaslavsky refuses to admit that there is only one world economy or world system. Even as he asserts the USSR is an advanced industrial system as technologically sophisticated as any Western society, Zaslavsky claims that the USSR has its *own* world system just as good and important as the Western one. The USSR is thus portrayed as a new core state colossus, running its own intricate world economy rather than as a brute military colossus intent on conquering the Western world. Under the core state colossus axiom, the USSR shares power as an equal with the capitalist world economy dominated by the US. Rather than being a mere sub-imperial or upwardly mobile semi-peripheral upstart, this USSR is a potentially universal form of society. Likewise, it is a stable and viable mode of social organization "with enormous potentials which do not show any sign of economic or military decline."[7]

We will address this view more thoroughly later. For now, we will note that Zaslavsky might admit that Moscow may have its equivalent of a Watts or Harlem, its peripheral pockets of poverty corresponding to Appalachia. And no system gets to be a core state colossus without tremendous military power and fat defense appropriations. Still the "antidote" axioms implicit in Zaslavsky's article really do not shed any more light on the USSR than do the original dubious axioms he imputes to American Sovietology.

The issue of ethnocentrism forces one to ask, more generally: What can be known about other societies, and who can acquire this knowledge with the least distortion? In accusing me of ethnocentrism, Zaslavsky relies on his first-hand experience. The usual bias of most audiences, especially in contemporary area studies, favors this "man on the street" approach. It is commonly assumed that an emigre always knows more and better than an expert, who only deals with his country "from afar." But the emigre isn't necessarily informed: no one person can know everything all the time about any subject dealing with his native land, even though he may have an "insider's view" on some points. The same holds for the expert, who isn't necessarily *un*informed. Nevertheless, the prejudice in favor of "native sources" handicaps the experts in their ability to put across an alternative view. Consequently, Zaslavsky can get away with slamming assertions or disputing the authority of Pipes, Goldman, Castoriadis, and me merely by speaking as Zaslavsky the emigre.

Ultimately, Zaslavsky's major claim is that "the Soviet economy operates in a qualitatively different way than its Western counterpart."[8] Therefore, one cannot apply world standards to its operation. Any attempt to do so results in the charge of "ethnocentrism," because the "application of criteria not proper for a Soviet-type society may lead to a dangerous underestimation of Soviet capabilities."[9] This sort of relativism is indefensible and can promote a problematic overestimation of Soviet capabilities. Even worse, it becomes a conceptual excuse for the excesses, inefficiencies or evils that are also characteristic of Soviet-type societies. By Zaslavsky's reason-

5. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
9. *Ibid.*

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ing, we are barred from applying ethnocentric criteria in judging the socialist economics behind the agricultural collectivization drives of Stalin, the Draconian de-urbanization of Kampuchea by Pol Pot, or the rural communalization campaigns of Mao Tse-tung because "economies of shortage" operate in qualitatively different ways than their Western counterparts. Of course they do. Yet with this truism Zaslavsky would have social theorists suppress consideration of the whys and wherefores of these differences in the name of fighting ethnocentric bias. Such methodological precepts are equally, if not more, culture-bound, faulty, and arrogant in their relativism than any attempt to judge the USSR by some transnational standard of "advanced industrialism."[10] There are several variants of this model, and in terms of global standards tied to more than consumer goods, the USSR clearly is, at best, a "developing" or "underdeveloped" advanced industrial economy.

2. The State of Soviet Technology. In addition to these questions, Zaslavsky really is arguing against several conceptual constructs that purportedly plague the viewpoints of all American Sovietological analysts. One is the "implicit" attitude that allegedly prevents American analysts from acknowledging the excellence of Soviet technology. "Soviet achievements" in science and technology "hardly need to be proven," he claims.[11] But that's hardly enough. Everyone admits basic Soviet science, theoretical work and education can be first-rate. But, then, the same is true of India, South Korea and Taiwan. While the technological snafus of American technology from the space race to recalled autos to gold-plated but unworkable weaponry are legendary, Soviet technology is also notoriously shoddy. Moreover, to mention only a few cases in point, the loss ratio of Soviet MiGs to US fighters in Korea, Vietnam or the Middle East; the low number of Soviet and tsarist Russian Nobel prizewinners in science; the complaints of Third World consumers about shoddy Soviet military, agricultural, and industrial equipment; the facsimiles of US bombers and NASA spacecraft touted as breakthroughs of Soviet aerospace design; the KGB snooping in Silicon Valley; the need for East German designers to help modernize Soviet machine tools or microelectronics; the uninventive Soviet duplication of IBM computers, down to the color of their cabinets; the imported Tolyatti and Kama River automotive and truck plants; the high circular error probability ratings of Soviet MIRVs before obtaining Western machine tools — all lead one to question Zaslavsky's fundamental faith in Soviet technology.

The USSR's technological superiority *vis-à-vis* most other single national economies is most evident in its ability to focus its scientific manpower and resources to overcome technological lag and copy Western innovations with some success. Still, its technological inferiority shows up also in its inability to use its scientific manpower and

10. On this point, Zaslavsky not only suggests that I am ethnocentric about the USSR, but that my alleged ethnocentrism also is "transitive." That is, since I am ethnocentric about the USSR and its technology, then I must also be ethnocentric about Japanese technology in that "until recently, such arguments were made concerning Japanese science and industry" (p. 157). Such arguments have been made, but not by me. Zaslavsky, however, is correct in noting that the USSR and Japan *do* capitalize on their relative backwardness *vis-à-vis* American technology by letting U.S. firms and labs pay the start-up costs of initial development. Once the learning curve begins, Japanese and Soviet producers can then enhance or imitate American or European designs. Nonetheless, Japan is much better than the USSR at this process most of the time. For a discussion of the advantages of backwardness and late industrialization, see Alexander Gerscenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962) and Thorstein Veblen, *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* (New York, 1964).

11. Zaslavsky, *op.cit.*, p. 157.

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resources to consistently lead and outstrip Western scientific and technological production. Thus, as I noted in my review, it seems that the USSR has not fully mastered the working of "advanced industrialism," taken in terms of transnational and not merely American standards.

In a comparable line, Zaslavsky claims that, in many sectors of its R&D, "the Soviet Union has never heavily relied on borrowing or imitating but rather on the creative strength of its native science and technology."[12] Yet, such achievements do need to be proven. His experience of "having worked for some 15 years in the Soviet mining industry as a worker, engineer and middle-level manager" does not bolster his argument here in and of itself, all the more so since Zaslavsky admits he was not a technology analyst with complete knowledge of many technical systems in more than one industry. Could he make this claim if he had been a computer designer, a microelectronic engineer, a software analyst, a biogenetic technician, a composite materials expert, an industrial process engineer, an offshore oil driller, a heavy truck designer, or a missile guidance engineer? In all of these cases, he probably could not, in all truthfulness, say his product and/or equipment was state of the art or, if it was, that it was Soviet-made (unless manufactured from reverse-engineered Western models).

Zaslavsky distorts my argument when he argues I claim "Western industrial society is presented as the demiurge and the only source of creativity in the world while Soviet society is a military colossus with clay feet resting on Western trade and technology."[13] I agree that "judgments of this kind become a matter of degree and definition."[14] Consequently, I carefully noted that the consciously chosen technological imports of the USSR "are not a function of inferior Soviet scientific skill, inadequate theoretical preparation or technological inabilities." Likewise, I agree that the USSR "always can cut itself off from world trade and survive as an autarchic-command economy."[15] On these two accounts, Zaslavsky completely misrepresents my arguments. (How I reached the conclusion that the USSR has not fully developed "advanced industrialism" is presented elsewhere.)[16]

I would agree with Zaslavsky that claims made by others about the USSR's economy being "absurd" or "anachronistic" are greatly exaggerated. But Puddington, Goldman and Pies argue this: I do not. Instead, I argue that advanced industrialism is an increasingly transnational mode of production, based on energy, labor, resources, technological and managerial input from many different nations and that is largely controlled by and used to benefit transnational corporations. Most of these corporations are Western and their scope of operation is backed militarily by the large OECD Western states; hence, one can speak of Western trade or technology. In no case do I claim that it is "American," as Zaslavsky would have me say.

Unless the import of foreign technology from the OECD nations really is part of a ruse to dupe American academics into believing the USSR is backward, then these imports must contribute something to the Soviet economy that it otherwise could not or would not produce. The USSR would grow within its own small world system

12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
15. Luke, *op.cit.*, p. 161.
16. See, for example, Timothy W. Luke and Carl Boggs, "Soviet Subimperialism and the Crisis of Bureaucratic Centralism," in *Studies in Comparative Communism,* XV:1-2 (1982), pp. 95-124; Timothy W. Luke, "Informationalism and Ecology," *Telos*, 56 (Summer 1983), pp. 59-73; and Timothy W. Luke, "Technology and Soviet Foreign Trade: On the Political Economy of an Underdeveloped Superpower," *International Studies Quarterly,* 29:3 (September 1985), forthcoming.

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without foreign technical input. But it might grow faster with greater sophistication with them, which alleviates underdevelopment. I did not say that all Soviet industry "is obviously inferior" nor that all "Soviet development could still be attributed to the beneficial influences of previous purchases from the West."[17] But there is evidence that important sector of Soviet industry have relied upon "merchandise purchases, technological 'invisibles,' commercial financing and industrial licenses . . . to improve their output and productivity."[18]

Zaslavsky admits himself "that the Soviet Union and East European countries have been importing from the West noticeable quantitites of goods and know-how to introduce new technologies and modernize existing industries."[19] But he also dismisses the importance of this and, by doing so, misses the main point, which is not the quantity of imports but their impact on economic sectors, industrial enterprises and specific technical processes. Without Western imports or models, specific sectors and processes of Soviet industry, science and technology would be materially less complex, more backward and less productive, particularly computers, aircraft, spacecraft, microelectronics, sophisticated metallurgical goods, and chemicals.

Zaslavsky also misrepresents American Sovietology when he suggests "Soviet massive purchases of grain are often cited as the clearest evidence of the Soviet dependence on the West."[20] In fact, most experts agree that Soviet agriculture is wasteful enough and that the Soviet state could become dictatorial enough to entirely eliminate the need for Western food imports. Western farmers, however, lose money most of the time on every bushel of grain they ship anywhere. Thus, the Soviet state is simply cashing in on the same bargain that most Ethiopian refugees, Kroger shoppers or Texas cattle feedlot owners now enjoy. The real dependence is technological, scientific and industrial.

3. World Systems Theory and the USSR. While Zaslavsky admits there are "some positive and promising aspects" to world systems theory, he asserts it is flawed on three points: 1) it overemphasizes the influence of "world market opportunities on the socio-economic structures of nation-states"; 2) it virtually ignores "major differences between the policies of economic exploitation of underdeveloped countries" by Western societies and transnationals, on the one hand, and those of socialist states on the other; and 3) by raising "the capitalist world to the rank of the solely existing global system," it fosters the "virtual neglect of power relations and political-military conflicts in the world today."[21] For the most part, he is wrong on all three points.

First, with regard to world systems theory overemphasizing the market: World systems theorists argue that the market works hand in hand with coercive state power. Thus, "success in the capitalist world system is bsed on a combination of effective state power and competitive advantage in production."[22] The dynamics of using political power to appropriate surplus product, domestically and internationally, are part and parcel of world market processes and intenational trade. A logic of domination always attends a logic of commodification and exchange in this framework.

Zaslavsky is also wrong when he reads world systems theories in terms of a 20th-

17. Zaslavsky, *op.cit.*, pp. 159, 158.
18. Luke, "Review-Symposium," *op.cit.*, p. 163.
19. Zaslavsky, *op.cit.*, p. 163.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 162, 165.
22. Christopher Chase-Dunn, "Interstate System and Capitalist World-Economy: One Logic or Two?" in *International Studies Quarterly*, 25:1 (March 1981), p. 29.

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century world economy or as a "series of separate 'economies' which are 'national' in scope" and which, under certain circumstances, trade with each other, "the sum of these (limited) contacts being called the international economy."[23] Actually, Wallerstein sees a world economy as a system that exists if and only if "there is an ongoing extensive and relatively complete social division of labor with an integrated set of production processes which relate to each other through a 'market' which has been 'instituted' or 'created' in some complex way. . . . Today, the entire globe is operating within the framework of this singular social division of labor we are calling the capitalist world economy."[24] Wallerstein emphasizes the fact that the capitalist world economy shapes but does not create political and social institutions. In addition, it is a *historical* social system that began in the 16th century, growing in scope until it encompassed the entire world by the 20th century.

The historical process is key: tsarist Russia was part of this world economy. Although a Marxist-Leninist movement took power in this state in 1917, and while it has worked to change the USSR's relation to and position in the capitalist world economy since the 1920s, in fact, the Soviet regime's "continued location in the capitalist world economy and the interstate system seriously constrains the kind of transformations they can effectuate within the boundaries of a given state."[25] Specifically, "the similarity between contemporary socialist states and other earlier semi-peripheral countries is striking."[26] Therefore, like tsarist Russia in relation to the capitalist world economy in 1915, the USSR in relation to this system in 1985 is an "upwardly mobile semi-peripheral area" as an importer of high technology and manufactured goods, despite the low quantities, and an exporter of raw materials. The USSR's strong state power enables it to protect its system, but its poor competitive advantage keeps it in a semi-peripheral niche. That Soviet leaders may choose to run their "economy of shortages" in this fashion does not negate its semi-peripheral standing. This "qualitatively different way" of macro-economic management has led to a more dependent position in the world economy and underdevelopment in Soviet industrialization.

Second, there is nothing new in Zaslavsky's claim that world systems theory suffers from a "failure to recognize the existence of a second world system" in the USSR/CMEA sphere of trade. Many studies acknowledge the "major differences" between Western transnational corporate and Soviet-style political imperialism. Frank, for example, argued in 1971 that "exploitation and underdevelopment can be eliminated only by destruction of, or escape from, the system. Socialism has so far proved the only effective way of doing so."[27] However, this socialist world system was created by force of arms, not technogical-industrial prowess during World War II. Still, Khrushchev's moves toward a socialist international division of labor and the anti-containment security imperatives of the USSR, as Zaslavsky claims, have created "a new superstate structure, the Soviet-type world system with its own division of labor and largely internal developmental dynamics."[28] Yet, in terms of Wallerstein's model, this order may be more of a "world empire" or a "territorial division of labor encompassed by a single

23. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Patterns and Perspectives of the Capitalist World-Economy," *Contemporary Marxism*, 9 (Fall 1984), p. 59.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
26. Christopher Chase-Dunn, "Socialist States in the Capitalist World-Economy," *Social Problems*, 27:5 (June 1981), pp. 518-519.
27. Andre Gunder Frank, *On Capitalist Underdevelopment* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 44.
28. Zaslavsky, *op.cit.*, p. 167.

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political structure"[29] than a world economy.

World systems theorists also acknowledge that this Soviet world system has internal relations of reproduction in the USSR/CMEA economy that differ considerably from the capitalist model. Clark and Bahry hold that "dependency appears more political in the Soviet bloc than in most capitalist contexts, and the political nature of socialist dependence seems to have a systematic impact on the bilateral relations between the dominant center and the peripheral dependencies. Under socialist, as compared to capitalist dependency, the elites are more externally oriented, political subservience is higher, and economic exploitation is lower. It is the *political* nature of Soviet bloc dependency rather than any inherent socialist vs. capitalist logic that accounts for these differences."[30]

And, third, Zaslavsky plainly is wrong when he complains that world systems theories neglect "power relations and political-military conflicts in the world today" by seeing the capitalist world economy as "the solely existing world system." World systems theorists do see power struggles and political-military battles as central forces in their work. Wallerstein, for example, argues "there is a logic of domination" in the world economy" and "in the process of the world bourgeoisie seeking to retain their power, they may engage in policies which lead to a nuclear world war. This could bring about the demise of the present system in a manner that would destroy much of the forces of production and therby make a socialist world order far less structurally feasible."[31] Such interests undercut Zaslavsky's hasty protests about "the basic weaknesses of a model which allows such an underestimation of those political-military conflicts between two existing world systems which threaten to destroy the world."[32]

Actually, Zaslavsky defines such conflict as *inter-systemic*, or as between a capitalist and a socialist world system, while world systems theory describes it as *intra-systemic*, or between the hegemonic core power of the capitalist world economy and the second-running hegemonic power of a sub-imperial domain within the overall world economy. Bourbon and Imperial France's conflicts with England as well as Imperial and Nazi Germany's struggle with Great Britain are models here. The United States, as Wallerstein notes, is engaged in a tremendous struggle over "West-West issues that are based on the great economic and therefore political threat of the two significant U.S. rivals, Western Europe and Japan."[33] In the past decade, moreover, Japan has eclipsed all of Western Europe as the major economic and technologial threat to the U.S

Even so, the USSR/CMEA bloc also is a "second running" counter-hegemonic power seeking to expand its empire in Eurasia and the Third World. Within the world economy, nevertheless, the Zaslavskian "Soviet world system" is a sub-imperial power, or a "limited, subaltern, and regionally based empire" that basically lacks the political-economic power and military capability of subjugating the entire world system.[34] As a result, it can be expected to police and protect its considerable but confined empire as an "underdeveloped superpower." This policy includes, as Zaslavsky

29. Christopher Chase-Dunn and Richard Rubinson, "Toward a Structural Perspective on the World-System," *Politics and Society*, 7:4 (1977), p. 454.

30. Cal Clark and Donna Bahry, "Dependent Development: A Socialist Variant," *International Studies Quarterly*, 27:1 (1983), p. 288.

31. Wallerstein, *op.cit.*, p. 69.

32. Zaslavsky, *op.cit.*, p. 165.

33. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, Vol. 2 (New York, 1979), p. 125. Cited in Zaslavsky, *op.cit.*, p. 165.

34. Luke and Boggs, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

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observes, "political imperialism" — the Polish coup of 1982, the Afghan invasion of 1979, the Ethiopian bailout of 1978, the Angolan-Cuban maneuvers of 1975, and the Czech invasion of 1968. World systems theory long ago worked these concerns into its logic. Zaslavsky's attempt to turn its attention to political-military conflict, in turn, is too little, too late.

Having made these points, I sympathize with many of Zaslavsky's insights. Although his case on my ethnocentrism reads more like a polemic against American Sovietology *in toto*, it does raise some important questions about comparative analysis and cross-cultural interpretation. Still, I cannot accept his radical relativism in dealing with the USSR. By the same token, his fresh concern with the workings of the world economy also is promising, but I see his argument about a Soviet world system as partly incorrect. The multinational USSR dominion over the CMEA bloc is not a world system, but rather a sub-empire within the larger capitalist world economy. Finally, I would state that point on which I am in agreement with Zaslavsky. Given my reservations, "a new form of world systems approach to international and national politics, one that addresses the global system as encompassing both a Western and a Soviet-type world system and considers their incompatibility, competition and contest as one of the major driving forces of today's historical process, is becoming indispensable."[35] Our debate may be a contribution to such a new approach to East-West relations.*

35. Zaslavsky, *op.cit.*, p. 168.

*Victor Zaslavsky is writing a reply to both Arato's and Luke's contributions in this issue. That will appear in the next issue of *Telos*.

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R. Emmett Tyrrell. *The Liberal Crack-Up*. Simon & Schuster. New York, 1984.

Liberalism Reconsidered. Rowman & Allanheld. New York, 1983.

Jennifer Hochschild. *The New American Dilemma: Liberal Democracy and School Desegregation*. Yale University Press. New Haven, 1984.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, the editor of the neo-conservative monthly *The American Spectator*, has been justly denounced as a "mean-spirited punk" by fellow writers from *The Nation* and *The New Republic*. Tyrrell, a knock-down version of H.L. Mencken, writing without the master's verve or wit, is indeed a pretentious and thoroughly unpleasant fellow whose book *The Liberal Crack-Up* is given over to a nuke-the-whales humor, i.e., an extended and generally senseless tirade against feminists, peaceniks, environmentalists, etc. It is all the more disturbing, then, to see that in one lucid moment, the chapter on "Whatever Happened to Liberalism," Tyrrell makes some worthwhile points.

Here is Tyrrell: "In fevered depravity the last Liberals ran riot through the 1970s gibbering: consciousness-raising! self-realization! group therapy! sexuality! human rights! water beds! wheat grass enemas! . . . and on and on, and so forth and so on, and let's get the hell out of here." His critics are right to say that it is unfair (as if polemics were supposed to be fair) to paint all liberals and leftists with this brush. They are right, but the description still fits an uncomfortably large number. Liberals, Tyrrell argues, are social and moral hypochondriacs, uncertain of what they want. In the 1970s, "All tenets and good causes," as he describes it, "went into ceaseless flux. At first the good liberal was for sexual freedom; then he was alarmed by charges of 'sexual harassment'; then he was rendered practically celibate by the rise of feminist prudery. There was integration, then black separatism. There was love and compassion; then, endlessly repeated, there was rage."

Tyrrell attributes this rage to "nothing more complicated than a running argument with life as it was led by normal Americans." This is too simple; there were and are genuine grievances rooted in segregation, militarism and male chauvinism. This said, Tyrrell has a point. Animating all too many "leftists" is a contempt for their fellow Americans, or at least those not officially designated as victims. The ability to annoy one's neighbors is taken as a sign of surpassing virtue. An example of leftism as a not-so-disguised snobbery comes from one of Tyrrell's critics, Christopher Hitchens of *The Nation*. Hitchens writes both for and in England for the engagingly upper-class and elegantly right-wing *Spectator*. British cultural disdain for those barbarous Yanks passes for leftism in America.

The idea of mass degeneracy functions more like an article of faith than a closely considered argument. The fools did choose Reagan yet again — need there be more proof of their unworthiness? There is no point in even arguing the issue with such people. What they need, in the words of the noted anti-nuclear campaigner Dr. Helen Caldicott, is "treatment." This is a theme Christopher Lasch takes up briefly in his article "Liberalism in Retreat," part of a series of essays put together under the title *Liberalism Reconsidered*. Norman Lear, Lasch notes, has argued that Archie Bunker's bigotry rests not on hatred but on the "fear of anything he doesn't understand." Because this fear is irrational, Archie's prejudices cannot be corrected by "rational persuasion." Therapy is required. It would be foolish to allow such people a say in society,

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but since they cannot be disenfranchised, the next best thing, argues Amy Gutmann in "How Liberal Is Democracy" (also part of *Liberalism Reconsidered*) is to turn as much of government as possible over to the courts. In the German tradition of freedom, she believes, like Goethe, that "the people have a right to be well-governed, not to govern themselves." Democrats, she argues — or what she calls "unreconstructed democrats," i.e., believers in self-government — "ascribe unrealistically high value to the democratic experience of the average American citizen. They also neglect to mention the much lower value that the experience has for economically disadvantaged citizens who more often than not find themselves an ineffectual minority on redistributive issues."

At first glance, Gutmann's fears of majoritarianism are puzzling. Generations of left liberals have bemoaned the anti-majoritarian underpinnings of the Constitution. They criticized the elaborate division of power, the fragmentation of sovereignty designed to thwart active majorities. Madison writing in "Federalist 63" defended representative rather than direct democracy because it permitted "the total exclusion of the people in their collective capacity" from any share in government. Similarly "Federalist 51 " argues that since "the society itself will be broken into so many parts, interests and classes of citizens, . . . the rights of individuals, or of the minority, will be in little danger from interested combinations of the majority." Rather than active majorities posing a threat to the republic, it is special interests, narrow but intense groups who have tunnelled their way into the treasury, that seem to be a problem at the moment.

We can make sense of Gutmann if we read her phrase "economically disadvantaged" to mean racially disadvantaged. The white majority, she implies, will never overcome its ingrained racism, so power has to be placed in the enlightened hands of the judiciary who will serve as the guardians of civilized values. This is the Kantian idea of good government, not self-government; but the *Reichsstaat*, a state based on the rule of law, and by law Kant meant the fusing of reason and morality.

To see what Gutmann's ideas might mean in practice we have to turn to Jennifer Hochschild's *The New American Dilemma: Liberal Democracy and School Desegregation*. Faced with the apparent failure of busing to achieve racial balance, Hochschild argues that court-ordered busing to achieve racial balance in schools failed because the courts did not go far enough in imposing their will. Faced with citywide integration orders, whites fled to the suburbs, but the court refused to pursue them there. In a 1974 decision, *Milliken v. Bradley*, the Supreme Court ruled against metropolitan desegregation plans, arguing that remedies had to be imposed within city boundaries. Hochschild wants to correct that by a) having the courts impose regional integration plans; and b) precluding any political opposition to such plans. Or, as she put it, "democracy must give way to liberalism."

Is liberalism so impoverished as to suppose that equality can be imposed rather than achieved? Hochschild's plan reminds me of Lionel Trilling's comment about Matthew Arnold. Arnold, he said, believed so firmly in reason that he was certain it justified the use of its antithesis — force — without which it was powerless. In other words, in the name of equality (or at least the proper numerical rations based on race), Hochschild is willing to eliminate the autonomy liberalism is based on. Liberty, argues David Spitz, is the overriding good for liberals, because we can develop our capabilities only through choice. Equality is important so that the greatest number of people can exercise rational choice.

But let us set aside these philosophical points for a moment. Are Gutmann and

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Hochschild so disdainful of electoral politics as to have ignored the recent electoral returns? Do they not see the connection between the impositions of an aggressive and often constitutionally ungrounded liberal judiciary and the middle class backlash that produced Reagan? If, by bad luck, the courts were to take up Hochschild's cudgels, it would produce a constitutional crisis and an orgy of court-stripping. But the more fundamental question is why contemporary liberalism has become so impoverished as to find in coercion the sole means to its often worthy goals?

To their everlasting credit, it was liberals who provided black America with essential support in the struggle for racial equality. During the New Deal it was the liberals on the Court not in the Congress who were sensitive to the plight of Afro-Americans. It was Judge Harlan Stone, soon to become chief justice, who, in footnote 4 of the 1938 Carolene Products case, laid the basis for America's racial reformation. Stone asserted the right of the court to a peculiarly aggressive style of judicial review in cases of "prejudice against discrete and insular minorities . . . , which tends seriously to curtail the operation of those political processes ordinarily to be relied upon to protect minorities." Judicial racial activism was then to recompense for the political inability of the New Deal to service its black clients.

What was less noticed was that it was a two-way relationship, particularly for judicial reformers. It was on the strength of the black precedent that constitutional law was rewritten across the spectrum of legal concerns. The assumption was, and it was partly correct, that racism was so deeply embedded that to eliminate it would require a broader transformation of society at large. Even today, when a judicial activist such as Ronald Dworkin wants to defend the constitutional basis of *Roe v. Wade,* he cites not the specifics of the Constitution but the court's previous decisions in racial cases to go well beyond the letter of the document to the supposed underlying principles. The attempt by liberals to use blacks as a battering ram for broader reform has imposed hidden costs. Hostility toward liberal social intervention on the part of government and hostility toward blacks have become intertwined.

The Stanley Greenberg Analysis Group conducted a series of extensive interview sessions with meetings of eight to ten white Michigan Democrats who had voted for Reagan. Initially, the groups of voters wandered over a variety of topics: inflation, taxes, economic mismanagement. But sooner or later, the conversation turned to race. "It would start with one person raising the subject almost apologetically. Then it just opened up. People would start telling stories of how opportunities in their lives had been blocked by special privileges given blacks — promotions they did not get, small business loans they did not qualify for. And once they started, you could hardly stop them," according to the report of the Greenberg Group. Greenberg concluded: "Democratic defectors have deeply felt racial sentiments that are as formative as their views of government and the Democratic Party. This underlying racial feeling infuses everything they think about government and party." In in-depth polling across the country that Greenberg later undertook, the same results came up over and over.

What now? Does this mean that the Democrats should cave in to racist sentiment? Hardly, but nor is a campaign against racism per se the issue, because, as Greenberg and others have pointed out, most (though not all) of the sentiment is not ideologically racist. A good deal of it is based on a well-justified fear of black street criminals. It does mean, however, that the liberal program for judicially based racial reform is at the end of its line. It must be replaced, as Eleanor Holmes Norton, William J. Wilson and others have argued, by a combination of black self-help programs and a new cooperatively based legislative agenda.

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Jobs have to be at the head of the agenda. The single greatest source of black female-headed families, as Wilson has demonstrated, is the lack of jobs with a salary capable of supporting a family for young black men of marriageable age. But what of those young black women already trapped by teenage pregnancy? Holmes argues for normatively based social programs that would "concentrate on changing life styles as well as imparting skills and education." Such programs, she goes on, would have to be "far more disciplined than services to the poor generally have been." But judicial liberals are committed to the notion that welfare is a constitutional right. How would they respond to the notion of discipline as a condition for receiving services? Moreover, in the fashion of Dworkin, judicial liberals are committed to the idea of neutrality in personal conduct. The government, they argue, has no right to discriminate between different life styles, in so far as those life styles do not directly violate the rights of others. (Right-wingers are also learning how to play the game of court-created "rights" and it is not hard to see how inventive justices on a Reaganized court might argue that welfare, as presently constituted, is just such a violation of property rights of those who pay the taxes.) The ACLU no doubt would contend that any attempt to change the "life style" of teenage mothers is an unwarranted intrusion into their private affairs. Some feminists, who have never forgiven Moynihan for suggesting that fathers were necessary at all, would also no doubt object.

The courts are an unlikely venue for further racial reformation for another reason. Under Reagan, if liberalism is resurgent in the courts, it will be a liberalism that shares the same formal structure as judicial liberalism, but a very different set of goals. The emphasis on rights will continue, but it will be the rights of property that will be sacrosanct. Potential justices, such as Richard Posner or Antonin Scalia, will no doubt carefully guard property rights from legislative encroachment. What judicial liberals of the left- or right-wing variety share is a common hostility to prerogatives of democratic self-government.

Liberals and conservatives have switched positions on any one of a number of issues over the last two decades: presidential power, isolationism, racial neutrality. If Reagan does get to transform the Supreme Court, we're likely to see the judicial liberals quickly shed their activist robes for a new wardrobe of strict constructionism. The model here is Mondale's warnings about the deficit. Mondale was right, but his criticisms were unconvincing, coming from the leader of a party that has spent the last 40 years arguing that deficits don't matter. Liberal calls for judicial restraint are likely to fall flat in the same way. The upshot of right-wing judicial activism — leading, say, to a repeal of *Roe v. Wade* — will be to accelerate the politicization of the courts. And that can only further erode the distinction between law and politics fundamental to any civilized society.

Fred Siegel

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Paul Piccone. *Italian Marxism.* University of California Press. Berkeley, 1983. 206 pages.

The resiliency and independence of Italian Marxism is often attributed to the influence of Gramsci.[1] This influence arises in part from Gramsci's role as a founder and theoretician of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Yet, his significance arises from his identification with Western Marxism. Gramsci is considered to be a prime representative of this tradition by virtue of his roots in Hegelianism, which is often used to explain how the PCI was spared many of the worst aspects of Stalinism.[2] It is also credited with allowing the PCI to develop its "third way" or "via italiana," which abandons the accepted Marxist-Leninist approaches to the acquisition of political power and makes the pursuit of parliamentary politics a legitimate enterprise for the communist movement.[3] Paul Piccone's book, *Italian Marxism,* challenges the presumption that the PCI's present pursuit of parliamentary reforms is a continuation of Gramsci's politics. On the contrary, he argues that the present political dilemmas of the PCI are directly the result of its betrayal of Gramsci's neo-Hegelian heritage to Leninism. Piccone reconstructs the theoretical roots of Gramsci's Marxism to show the essential role Hegelianism has played in the theoretical development of Marxism in Italy prior to the emergence of Western Marxism, that phenomenon with which we usually associate the rise of Hegelian Marxism. Furthermore, the argument is made that under the influence of Hegelianism, Italian Marxism not only encountered many of the same problems that later came to be identified with Western Marxism, but in some cases it even went beyond the accomplishments of Western Marxism. In particular, Piccone identifies the uniqueness of Italian Marxism in its attempt to develop a philosophy of praxis out of a philosophy of history, a project neglected by Western Marxism because of the disrepute into which historical materialism had fallen. Piccone then examines the historical influence of Hegelianism on Italian Marxism as a means of clarifying the issues and controversies surrounding Hegelian Marxism.

Gramsci's appeal to Marxists in general arises out of what appears to be his ability to straddle divergent Marxist traditions. Yet, controversy has arisen precisely out of everyone's attempt to claim Gramsci as one of their own. Part of Gramsci's attractiveness lies in what appears to be the one political toehold he provides for Western Marxism in the international communist movement, that is, to the degree that Gramsci is cited to help justify the political lines of the PCI. This is not entirely a misappropriation of Gramsci, since he clearly wanted his theoretical concerns incorporated into the mainstream Marxist movement. Yet, due to his role in the communist movement, he is still seen as an heir to the classical Marxist tradition even by those Marxists who reject Western Marxism.[4] For the PCI, Gramsci's attempt to apply Leninism and the experiences of the Bolshevik revolution to the Italian revolutionary struggle allows the party to retain at least a nominal bond to the heritage of the communist movement, while Gramsci's ties to Western Marxism allow the party to distinguish itself from the

1. Russell Jacoby, *The Dialectic of Defeat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 105.
2. *Ibid.*
3. See Carl Boggs, *The Impasse of European Communism* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982).
4. See Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: Verso, 1976). Even Althusser, who rejected Hegel and attempted to separate Marxism from Hegelianism, considers Gramsci the only theoretical heir to Marx and Engels. See Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 1977), p. 144.

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policies of orthodox Marxism and the practices of Stalinism. As James Joll notes, Gramsci became the means by which Marx and Lenin could be salvaged from Stalinism.[5] This, however, is precisely what Piccone questions, for he argues that a reconciliation between Grasmci and Leninism could only take place at the expense of Gramsci's own thought. This dilemma, though, is not entirely due to the instrumentalization of Gramsci's thought in the hands of the PCI or the critics of Western Marxism. Gramsci himself is partly to blame for the confusion.

Seduced by the possibility of the Bolshevik revolution as a model for the Italian revolution, Gramsci argued that his own theoretical elaborations were merely the translation of Marxism and Leninism into the language of Italian politics. Piccone then undertakes the recovery of the Italian neo-Hegelian tradition which informed Gramsci to show how this could not possibly be the case. Despite Gramsci's claim that he was extending Leninist politics to Italy, Piccone argues that Gramsci was only minimally informed by Lenin's writings. Instead, Gramsci's Marxism was more shaped by the Italian neo-Hegelian tradition. "It is an almost direct continuation of the Italian tradition of social political thought, which, from Spaventa to Labriola to Croce, sought to develop a neo-Hegelianism whose goal of human emancipation focused on social individuality and a qualitatively new form of existence" (p. 166). This was not a contradiction since Gramsci understood "Marxism as the crowning point of Western thought presupposing the 'Renaissance and Reformation, German philosophy and the French Revolution, Calvinism and English classical economics' " (p. 2). In his confrontation with Croce, then, Gramsci did not merely turn Croce on his head; rather, he used his critique of Croce as a means of rejuvenating the neo-Hegelian tradition for Marxism. Gramsci's theories of civil society, intellectual formation, and cultural hegemony are all presented as outgrowths of this tradition. Thus, despite attempts by other Marxists to make Gramsci an heir of the Second International or a footnote to Lenin, Piccone demonstrates how the "classical" Marxist tradition of Italy to which Gramsci belonged experienced its development as part of Italian neo-Hegelianism. Piccone then sees himself as extending the project begun by Gramsci. That is, he arrives at an understanding of the situation of Italian Marxist politics through a systematic study of its intellectuals. Where Gramsci tried to explain the failure of post-World War I European revolutions, Piccone attempts to explain the revolutionary retrenchment of the contemporary PCI. Furthermore, Gramsci was challenged by Croce as the dominant intellectual figure who stripped neo-Hegelianism of its political character and turned it into a cultural hegemonic force. The political parallel to Croce for Piccone, if not his intellectual parallel, is Lenin. However, Piccone is not concerned with rejuvenating Leninism, but with exorcising Leninism from Italian Marxism.

Piccone's emphatic concern with demonstrating the influence of Hegelianism on the development of Italian Marxism arises out of the necessity to challenge the intellectual dominance of Leninism. This dominance has stripped Marxism of its capacity to develop adequate theoretical and political programs, precipitating the "crisis of Marxism." But this crisis is as much a result of Marxism's repression of its own theoretical and historical legacies, including the neglect of its Hegelian heritage. Hegelianism emphasizes history, subjectivity, and consciousness as primary components of social formations. Orthodox Marxism has generally considered these characteristics idealistic and difficult to assess politically. Instead, it has developed what Piccone, following Russell Jacoby, calls conformist Marxism.[6] Conformist Marxism, attracted by the suc-

5. James Joll, *Antonio Gramsci* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), pp. 18-19.
6. See Jacoby, *op.cit.*

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cess of the Bolshevik revolution, attempts to utilize Marxism-Leninism as a model for revolutionary programs. Even Gramsci succumbed to this to a degree. However, Gramsci's Italian intellectual heritage allowed him to avoid the tendency of conformist Marxism to approach political problems abstractly and independently of their historical context. This approach tends to separate the means from the end, as if methods themselves do not have moral and political implications that affect the development of the outcome. By treating the means instrumentally, conformist Marxism has developed many of the same characteristics as positivism. In particular, it rejects idealism and relies on empirical methods to develop "scientific" theories to gauge political developments. The development of a Marxist materialist base along lines similar to positivism is due to the tendency to identify historicism with empiricism, resulting in the application of empirical methods to historical thinking. Considering how the presence of positivism in Marxism has allowed the identification of human emancipation with industrialization and scientific progress, this hybrid certainly cannot lay claim to a critical base. For this reason, Piccone turns to the Italian neo-Hegelian tradition. In its concern with developing a philosophy of praxis out of a philosophy of history, and its subjection of all theory to an absolute historicism, he finds a theoretical perspective which is opposed to positivist and scientific deformations of Marxism. However, the "crisis of Marxism" is not due entirely to the dominance of positivism or the general adoption of the Bolshevik model for the rationalization of political action. The crisis may be said to originate with Marx himself, who was caught up between Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment rationality and ambiguous about whether to give priority to the expansion of technological forces or class struggle as the force behind social revolution.[7] In short, the "crisis of Marxism" must not ignore the crisis of Marx himself; and it cannot be solved merely by restoring Marxism's Hegelian core. Hegel, however, may emerge as the key to the resolution of this dilemma. What Piccone's book shows, perhaps unwittingly, is precisely what Hegel himself can offer as a critical social theorist.

Piccone traces the Italian neo-Hegelian tradition to its origins in the Risorgimento. Its role in Italy's unification movement was so profound and lasting that Hegelianism became part of the "civil life" of the nation and a political and cultural force of its own. By identifying political freedom with spiritual or subjective freedom, Hegel provided a critique of ideology against the Catholic Church that maintained a political and cultural hegemony over the consciousness of the masses, repressing the desire for political freedom. Furthermore, Hegel's identification of the state with the principle of subjective freedom provided a democratic theory with which to attack the privileged estates. As Piccone notes, the development of Neapolitan Hegelianism "was the direct result of attempts by progressive southern intellectuals to transpose the French Revolution onto Italy in hopes of triggering similar events" (p. 40). Actually, Hegel offered more than the principles of the French Revolution. Though tradition has it that Hegel annually remembered the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, he saw a continuous line from the principles that informed the French Revolution to its transformation into the Terror. For Hegel, the "liberal bourgeois principles" of French Revolution necessarily led to the repression of individualism. Hegel's development then of a concept of the ethical state, especially as presented in the *Philosophy of Right*, was an attempt to go beyond the political experiences of the Enlightenment. Specifically, it

7. See Albrecht Wellmer, *Critical Theory of Society*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1971) for the full elaboration of this argument.

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was a conscientious response to the decline and corruption of the public sphere.[8] It was this that still allowed the theory to provide an "explosive political program" that fed into the development of Italian Marxism even after the conservative retrenchment that took place after unification undermined any possibility of realizing liberal bourgeois principles.

Piccone focuses on Bertrando Spaventa as the central figure during the Risorgimento responsible for articulating Hegelianism as a doctrine of liberation that was a precursor of the Gramscian vision. For Spaventa, Hegelianism not only provided a critique of ideology against the Catholic Church, it was itself the outcome of the repression and hegemony of the Vatican. Spaventa traced the decline of Italian intellectual life — and by extension the stagnation of Italian political life — to the domination of the Church. The heritage of Italian thought after the Renaissance was forced north by the Church, where it influenced the development of other cultures. Hegelianism was merely the intellectual culmination of this development. Theoretically, then, Hegelianism was not foreign to Italian culture, but part of a tradition that was forced to develop in exile because of the repression of the Church. For Piccone, this was not some crude rationalization on the part of Spaventa to make right-wing nationalist forces accept Hegelianism (which they viewed as another foreign imposition) as a valid intellectual source for Italian culture, but something theoretically articulated by him as the "circulation of Italian thought." Whatever Spaventa's intentions, the introduction of Hegelianism into Italy was intended to do more than simply recover a lost tradition; it was also intended as a means by which Italy could struggle for the political achievements already attained in other parts of Europe. Spaventa appears to have especially drawn on Hegel's own political theory as a foundation for identifying the creation of a state with the extension of political freedoms to the masses. The state was to be a political framework that allowed the people self-conscious control over their own political and cultural institutions. These ideas were later absorbed by Croce who then made them a dominant concern for Italian culture. It was Croce then who provided the theoretical continuity in Italian neo-Hegelianism that influenced Gramsci. This is why Spaventa is credited by Piccone with articulating many of the critical concerns that would later occupy Italian neo-Hegelian Marxism.

Piccone shows how, ironically enough, the radical implications of Spaventa's position evolved out of a left critique of right Hegelianism and the *Philosophy of Right*. The revisions that Spaventa made in the Hegelian framework, such as his call for social emancipation, his critique of the innate right of property, and the recognition of the central role of the masses in the revolutionary process, moved him, according to Piccone, closer to a characteristically Marxist position. Considering how the young Marx's own theoretical development evolved out of a confrontation with the *Philosophy of Right* and the cultural hegemony of right Hegelianism, perhaps Spaventa's parallel development should not be too surprising. Marx's critique of the logic of the *Philosophy of Right* also led to the elaboration of some of his own key concepts, such as the concept of civil society, the critique of property right, the concept of the proletariat as the revolutionary class, and the method of immanent critique. Most of these concepts are also the foundation upon which Western Marxism rests. Considering the significance of the *Philosophy of Right* for Marx, it is surprising that the text itself has generally been ignored as a source for elaborating Marx's own concepts and perhaps resolving the ambiguities that exist in them.

The Hegel that has generally informed Marxism has been either the Hegel of the

8. See Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Berlin: Luchterhand, 1971), p. 144.

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Phenomenology or of the *Science of Logic*.[9] In both cases, Marxists have tried to unravel critical social and political categories primarily out of philosophical texts, while ignoring Hegel's own political theory. By showing the theoretical continuity that exists from Spaventa to Gramsci, Piccone has clearly located an instance where Hegel's own political theory has had a direct influence on the development of Marxism. However, except for a short reference to Lorenz von Stein, Piccone never firmly identifies what informed Spaventa's left reading of Hegel. At some points, Piccone does note that Spaventa's position is not based on liberal presumptions, but on Hegelian political theory. But this is only emphasized when Hegel's political theory provides a useful weapon against liberalism, social contract theory, and abstract individualism. Otherwise, Spaventa's critical theory is presented as an anticipation of Western Marxism. It is not necessary to draw parallels between Spaventa and Gramsci in order to draw out the radical implications of Spaventa's Hegelianism. Nor is Spaventa's own position necessarily a left reading of the *Philosophy of Right*. In fact, Spaventa's position is a direct appropriation of Hegel's political theory.

Those concepts which Piccone identifies as Spaventa's most lasting contributions to Italian Marxism are clearly within the *Philosophy of Right*. Piccone, for example, notes how Spaventa's concept of individuality and his presentation of political economy went beyond bourgeois notions to reflect a Marxist attitude. Yet, Spaventa's understanding of social individuality is no different from Hegel's; and the viable economic infrastructure which Spaventa tried to articulate for the modern state is a direct rendering of Hegel's civil society. Furthermore, Spaventa's vindication of the interventionist state for educating the masses to a cultural life that would free them from the hegemony of the Catholic Church — what Piccone characterizes as Spaventa's own "war of position" — is a pedagogical theory of the state that reflects Hegel's own concern with the experience of *Bildung* as the cultural formation of a people. The *Philosophy of Right* even provides an innate critique of property right. Property in Hegel is obtained for the purpose of alienating it, i.e., exchanging it. Thus all property is oriented around commodity production and the only value that exists is exchange value. There is then in Hegel no traditional notion of property right based on the retention of property independently of civil society. Apparently, Piccone's intent to demonstrate how Spaventa anticipated Gramsci caused him to ignore the degree to which Hegel's own political theory may have influenced Spaventa's thoughts. Instead, Piccone either attempts to excuse Spaventa's use of the *Philosophy of Right* by arguing that he radicalized it, or he emphasizes Spaventa's use of the *Phenomenology* which keeps Spaventa within the ranks of Western Marxism even though he never read Marx. (Later, when Piccone examines Labriola's turn towards art as the ground for social theory, he does much the same thing by drawing parallels with Adorno while neglecting the influence of Vico.) Thus, despite his concern to demonstrate the significance of Hegel for Italian intellectual development, Piccone never quite gives Hegel his due. Rather, he uses Gramscian and Western Marxism as totalizing concepts to explain the particular development of Italian Marxism. This becomes, to a degree, a betrayal of the "absolute historicism" which Piccone himself wishes to restore to Marxism. In part, this is the result of Piccone's own attitude towards the *Philosophy of Right* which repeats the by-now discarded fallacy that the text was purely a right-wing rationalization of the Prussian conservative status quo of the 1820s. Though this was also the position of the young Marx when he first took aim at the *Philosophy of Right*, Marx was confronted with a hegemonic Hegelianism that had been appropriated as the cultural orthodoxy of right-wing forces. Therefore, Hegel's own political and philosophical intentions notwithstanding, Hegelianism had

9. Jacoby, *op.cit.*, p. 38.

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become a theory used by conservative forces to justify the status quo. Most readers of the *Philosophy of Right* continue to accept this interpretation, usually never reading beyond the preface and its statement about how the rational is actual and the actual is rational to feel secure in their interpretation of the book as a justification for conservatism. Such a neglect fails to give serious consideration to Hegel's own concern with the rationalization process of modernity.

Hegel presented the *Philosophy of Right* as a development beyond Enlightenment thought. He sought to present new concepts that would answer the problems of modernity, including the increasing tendency of the marketplace to colonize all aspects of social and political life. What he felt to be his original distinction between civil society and the state was an attempt to address the decline of the public sphere and the corruption of the liberal bourgeois state, as well as a critique of the anachronistic feudal structures and property relations which still existed in Germany. It thus provided an appropriate source for Italian theorists who were also confronted with a society facing the problems of industrialization and modernization, while still being overburdened with feudal structures. The neglect of this aspect of the *Philosophy of Right* is more the fault of Hegel's friends than of his enemies. Most of the modern Western Marxist scholarship on Hegel (e.g., Lukács, Avineri, Marcuse, Hyppolite, and Habermas) has usually turned to the younger Hegel's Jena writings, hoping to discover among these writings a radical political theorist who was perhaps more in tune with the aims of Marxism. These writings are usually trumpeted forth as if they were for Hegel what the *1844 Manuscripts* were for Marx. Hegel's Jena writings do show a concern for the individual fragmentation brought about in part by the division of labor and the debilitating effects of modern political economy. Yet, it is wrong to use them to demonstrate how Hegel prefigured Marx or to secure the Hegel-Marx link. The Hegel of the Jena period was attempting to develop a political economy that was not so different from his liberal predecessors. This tended to make the Hegel of Jena more democratic in the modern sense of being concerned with the direct public control of government. But it was the later Hegel who saw the limitations of this liberalism represented in the direction taken by the French Revolution. He then attempted to work out civil and political institutions that would maintain the principle of subjective freedom both for the individual and the general interest, especially in light of the corruption of the public sphere.

If there does exist a theoretical and political similarity between the young Hegel and the young Marx, it is to be found along the lines of the moral subjectivity by which both intended to define the active side of the willing subject.[10] After all, for Hegel, it is the moral subject who constitutes the active will of self-determination as freedom. The outlook of the moral subject, what Hegel calls the standpoint of morality, is a necessary step for awakening the individual to subjectivity, freedom, and the formal right of action that reflects the inner content and purpose of the will. These are characteristics which Marx also attributed to the self-constituting subject. But given the limitations of this position as examined in the *Philosophy of Right* under the section entitled *Moralität*, the early Marx may not necessarily be politically more mature than the later Hegel. The outlook of the moral subject also reappears in Western Marxism

10. In his study of the early Hegel, Habermas argues that the Jena writings presented a systematic position which focused on the moral development of the individual, a position which the later Hegel abandoned. Habermas is one of the few who sees a clear difference between the "early" Hegel and the "later" Hegel. However, he does so precisely for the reason that he prefers the position of the "young Hegel," which Habermas presents as a precursor of his own brand of Hegelian Marxism, despite its roots in liberal thought. See Jürgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

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and becomes one of its defining characteristics. Lukács' creation of an imputed class consciousness in a revolutionary proletariat is only one of the more well known cases of how Western Marxism has tended to identify the development of inward content in the subject with the absolute objectivity of the universal will. For Hegel, the "objectivity" of morality is merely an expression of formal consciousness that leads politically to Jacobin terror if the will turns entirely inward to assert itself as the totality and rejects all social values, duties, and responsibilities. Since the Hegelian standpoint of morality appears to contain many of the features associated with Western Marxism, perhaps it can elucidate what Piccone identifies as one of the most important problems troubling all post-Hegelian thought, namely, that of defining the self-creating subject. This problem is given special attention by Piccone during his examination of Labriola.

Antonio Labriola is identified by Piccone as the first rigorous Italian Marxist who developed within the Italian neo-Hegelian tradition. Under the influence of Spaventa's Hegelianism, Labriola positioned the active and creative moments of self-creation as inextricable phases of man's self-becoming. This position was aimed against the right wing of Italian Hegelianism, which reduced all new developments to the already given articulation of an all-encompassing system. For Piccone, this split in the ranks of Hegelianism reflects an internal contradiction that exists between Hegel's system as it is expressed in the *Logic* and his articulation of the process of becoming as it is presented in the *Phenomenology*. Piccone sees the Hegelian process of self-becoming contradicted by the Hegelian system that posits the subject as an already achieved self-consciousness. This preempts any genuine self-becoming and reduces movement to the logical requirements of the system. For Labriola, movement and self-becoming, which emphasized the subjective purposive side of human activity, took precedence over the system. This allowed him to reassert the revolutionary character of Marxism against the reformist policies of the Second International that succumbed to an objectivistic theory of social development. By emphasizing the subjective constitution of the subject, Labriola could focus on the formation of consciousness. His own Marxism then understood historical materialism as a method that explained forms of thought in terms of forms of being; consequently, he called for the development of Marxism as an autonomous *Weltanschauung*. Furthermore, given the absence of any revolutionary proletariat in Italy, the general backwardness of capitalist development, and the cultural domination of the Catholic Church, the focus on the consciousness of the masses provided a more appropriate theoretical orientation than a theory based on the automatic fall of capitalism. Labriola's own version of class consciousness thus "laid the theoretical foundation of the Italian Marxist tradition, which was to become the most viable alternative to both the classical social democracy of the Second International and the Marxism and Leninism of Russia and China" (p. 80).

Yet, Piccone argues that Labriola's reconstruction of historical materialism along the lines which emphasized the subjective constitution of the subject still presumed Marxism as a philosophy of history. The labor theory of value was used as a means through which true consciousness could be uncovered and the logic of the process could be specified. This would allow the reconstruction of the stages of development that would project "the *particularization* of the yet-to-be attained collective consciousness onto present capitalist society, where it would generate those contradictions whose resolution would culminate in the already presupposed totalization" (p. 86). In short, the labor theory of value, to the degree that it uncovered the productive relations of society, was to be utilized to reconstruct the development of capitalism as stages of consciousness that were steps leading to the generation of collective consciousness for the proletariat. Labriola thus was attempting to reconstruct a theory of materialism

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that would reconcile the contradiction between system and process. But as Piccone notes, this project could only be sustained if collective consciousness could be understood as the outcome. But in the absence of any fully realized collective subjectivity or revolutionary proletariat. Labriola ran up against the same problem of systematizing the process in terms of a projected vision, in this case one which presumed collective consciousness as the end of history. Finally, Labriola came to the conclusion that any attempt to systematize Marxism as a philosophy of history destroyed the revolutionary potential of the theory. He then abandoned the attempt and left the problem of the revolutionary subject unresolved, at least sparing himself the embarrassment which would later haunt Lukács. For Piccone, Labriola's conclusion appears similar to Adorno's thesis of the necessary fragmentary character of all revolutionary thought. More importantly, it also attests to how Labriola's theoretical development experienced the problems that were to face "the whole subsequent trajectory of Western Marxism from Lukács to Adorno" (p. 101).

Even though Labriola's failure to systematize Marxism may be representative of problems generally afflicting most post-Hegelian thought, the fault does not necessarily lie with Hegel. Beginning with Marx's own critique of Hegel, the tendency of Hegelian Marxism has been to search for the identical subject-object that is both in itself and for itself as the collective subject of history. Though the concept of the identical subject-object is Hegel's, in the *Philosophy of Right* it defines the subject at the standpoint of morality.[11] For Hegel, the moral subject cannot be identified with the collective subject of ethical life, for the rationality and consciousness of the moral subject is determined only by the subject's own personal intentions and desires. For the standpoint of morality, the subject's own inner sense of truth and self-interest becomes the basis of all action and judgment deemed universally valid and rational. Caught in subjectivism, the standpoint of morality only constitutes a formal consciousness and abstract universalism. Refusing then to acknowledge rational content outside of its own consciousness, the activity of the moral subject remains necessarily fragmentary and removed from the intersubjective activity that posits a true collective subject. It thus reverts to the constant internalization of consciousness leading either to stoic resignation or fanaticism. Hegel then would have agreed with Piccone's critique of Marxist attempts to develop a philosophy of history: prior to the attainment of collective subjectivity, the reconstruction of the subject "must be *instrumental*, i.e., grounded in *praxis* as successful mediation, but must forfeit any claim to exhaustiveness and, therefore, to a *definitive* status" (pp. 90-91). This notion of praxis as successful mediation without definitive status is precisely what characterizes the standpoint of morality.

The standpoint of morality constitutes the so-called active side that Marx tried to appropriate from German Idealism. For Hegel, this active side awakens the propertied self to the principle of subjective freedom, understood as becoming conscious of one's own power of self-determination. For the Hegelian Marxist tradition, the development of the notion of class consciousness or true consciousness for the proletariat has served the same purpose as the principle of subjective freedom. But for Hegel, the subject stands in relation to moral consciousness only as an "ought"; whereas the proletariat as the identical subject-object has usually been posited as an accomplished class consciousnessof ethical life. Therefore, just as the moral subject attempts to posit its one-sided view as the sole and supreme one, so has Hegelian Marxism attempted to unravel the totality out of the class consciousness of the identical subject-object. The

11. See G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945), §105.

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problem with the identical subject-object for Hegel, as Hegelian Marxism was also to learn, is that it lacks objective content in political and social institutions. Lukács, for one, attempted to resolve this problem by using the Leninist party to provide the proletariat with a political base to mediate the interest of the identical subject-object. At first glance, Lukács' "party" appears similar to Hegel's notion of the corporation which was to provide an ethical root in civil society for individuals with a collective interest resulting from their role in the division of labor. Yet, Hegel's notion of the corporation was that of an institution in which many of the characteristics of the liberal public sphere could be retained and protected from the corrupting influence of the marketplace. It thus resembled Gramsci's, rather than Lenin's, characterization of the party. Furthermore, it was also an institution that gave voice to the political interests of its members by sending representatives to the legislative body. Even so, the policies of the state were not to be based on the will of corporations; Hegel wanted to avoid having "special interests" dominate the government. At the same time, neither was the corporation to become subservient to the dictates of government; the corporation was not to be a bureaucratic agency through which government controlled civil society. Thus, though the identical subject-object identified the particularity and freedom of the subject, Hegel never intended for the abstract, formal consciousness of the identical subject-object to be identified with the totality. Unfortunately, the outcome of Lukács' theory was precisely the identification of the identical subject-object with the totality and the establishment of the party as *the* institutional foundation of ethical life. Informed by the Italian tradition that had a better sense of the political implications of Hegelianism, Gramsci was fortunate to avoid many of the problems that confronted orthodox Marxism and most of the Western Marxist tradition.

Gramsci considered German Idealism to be the core of Marxism. The Italian Marxism that Gramsci initially confronted, however, had ignored Spaventa's and Labriola's work and had become a typical branch of the Second International. Instead, the Italian neo-Hegelian tradition was continued through Croce; but he deradicalized it by adopting it within a liberal framework. Croce especially took Labriola's failure to develop a Marxist philosophy of history as indicative of the futility of trying to maintain the unity of theory and practice. Thus, by the time Gramsci came under the influence of the neo-Hegelian tradition, Croce had removed its political implications by maintaining the theoretical separation of history from politics. Gramsci was then faced with the task of regaining Marxism as a philosophy of praxis. Gramsci took Croce's claim that all history is present history and radicalized it into present politics. This was intended to restore the identification of history and politics by turnig all "historical reconstructions into historical mediations meant to provide direction in contemporary political struggles" (p. 42). Consequently, he was more interested in philosophy and culture and clearly did not fall in line with the orthodox Marxist concern for productive forces and economic bases. Furthermore, in light of the failures of previous systematizers and the economism of the Second International, Gramsci did not attempt to constitute Marxism as a philosophy of history which required a revolutionary agent to constitute the collective subject. According to Piccone, Gramsci's Hegelianism led him to the position that the "fully individualized ego is not the starting point of sociopolitical revolution, but the result" (p. 130). This then leads Piccone to assert that for Gramsci the "revolutionary process" is really a version of the bourgeois revolution that includes both political and social emancipation and completes the process of national unification never fully carried out by a weak Italian bourgeoisie. "At best, Gramsci's Marxism could seek a cultural hegemony only within an auto-

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nomous public sphere that would subsequently elaborate its own goals. From the very beginning, Italian Marxism could interpret the transition to socialism only as economic modernization and political democratization, putting aside all questions as to what form the resulting society eventually would take" (p. 108). If such is the case, the implication is that Gramsci was spared most of the pitfalls of Marxism by not identifying social individuality with the subjective consciousness of the identical subject-object. Instead, Gramsci apparently left the development of subjective consciousness precisely in that area designated by Hegel for its development, the sphere of civil society. Yet, as Piccone notes, even though Gramsci understood his Marxism as a development of Hegelianism, Bolshevism was to be its mode of realization. Piccone argues that this is not possible and thus takes on the task of trying to salvage Gramsci's Hegelian core from his Leninist shell.

Gramsci's turn to Bolshevism in many respects was comparable to Spaventa's adoption of Hegelianism. Nevertheless, Gramsci's own claim that his theoretical position was consistent with Leninist politics notwithstanding, Bolshevism provided Gramsci more with political inspiration than intellectual insight. In the last part of his book, Piccone shows how Gramsci's Leninism was mistaken and incompletely informed; it could not have been what it claimed to be. Even more, Piccone argues that it is precisely the presence of Leninism in Italian Marxism that has suffocated, rather than realized, the Gramscian vision. But this is not entirely due to Gramsci's own misconception of Leninism. Under Togliatti's leadership, the PCI early on attempted to appropriate Gramsci's political and philosophical positions. But with the rise of fascism Togliatti was forced to turn to the Soviet Union for sanctuary and guidance. Consequently, he was forced to accept the Stalinist position and de-emphasize the Italian neo-Hegelian tradition that he and Gramsci brought to the PCI. Gramsci's political thought, meanwhile, was retained to the degree it could be rationalized within the Leninist model and did not contradict it. Togliatti participated in this by defining Gramsci's appropriation of Leninism as centered around the doctrine of imperialism, the doctrine of revolution, and the doctrine of the party. Piccone takes up Togliatti's official presentation of Gramsci to examine the extent to which it contradict's Gramsci's true thought.

According to Piccone, Leninism's economistic explanation of imperialism led the PCI to develop a policy of modernization as an answer to the Southern question. Gramsci, however, rejected the economistic interpretation of the problem of Southern underdevelopment. He understood the problem as a cultural one that required the organization and education of the masses, not the industrialization of the South to the level achieved by the North. For Piccone, again, the crucial difference between Gramsci and Leninism lies in how the former understood praxis as a self-constituting activity whereas the latter understood praxis as an instrumental activity. This is clearly demonstrated in a comparison of Gramsci's theory of revolution and the party with the position of Leninism on these points. Leninism emphasized the acquisition of power and the development of bureaucratic organization as the means to conquer the state. Gramsci's thought emphasized the revolutionary transformation of society through its cultural transformation. In this process, the party was to be a pedagogical instrument for educating and organizing the masses to the highest possible level of moral and cultural development; it was not to be a bureaucratic or elitist organization that merely set policy for the masses to follow passively. The same applies to the state: its interest lay in education rather than domination. As Piccone points out, "Gramsci returns to a Hegelian notion of the state seen as the highest expression of civil society

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rather than as a mere tool of class domination, as in the orthodox Marxist tradition" (pp. 191-192). Gramsci's own theoretical positions then constantly appear to contradict Leninism. More significantly, they appear to do so from an Italian neo-Hegelian tradition that is totally irreconcilable with orthodox Marxism.

Given the degree to which Piccone shows how the Leninist elements in the PCI totally restructured Gramsci's thought in order to absorb it, one is left questioning the assertion that the PCI's unique development is the result of being informed by Gramsci's thought or the Italian neo-Hegelian tradition. Apparently, the neo-Hegelian tradition from Spaventa to Gramsci never really became part of the Italian Marxist mainstream, which continued to be generally informed by orthodox Marxism. Instead, as Piccone shows, the theoretical contributions of Italian Hegelian Marxism were better kept alive by the opponents of Marxism. Furthermore, Piccone convincingly argues that what is important in the Gramscian vision of Italian Marxism is the presence of its neo-Hegelian heritage. If so, what contribution, if any, does Marxism make? The example of Spaventa, who was never informed by Marxism but clearly influenced by Hegel's social and political thought, appears to answer that Hegel alone was sufficient for the development of the theoretical categories necessary for the critique of dominant Italian cultural institutions. Hegel, furthermore, is always referred to as a means to curb the positivist excesses to which Marxism always seems susceptible. If Marx's own retention of a latent Enlightenment rationality is what causes Marxism to succumb to positivism, the possibility then arises that Marxism itself is responsible for the corruption of the Gramscian vision. Even though the outcome of Piccone's argument leads to the position that Marxism really has no relevance to Italian cultural politics, near the end of his book he still appeals to the PCI to abandon its Leninist framework and return to the tradition absorbed by Gramsci if it ever truly hopes to develop a "via italiana." By the logical extension of Piccone's argument, what this actually means is not the transformation of the PCI into a Western Marxist party, but the adoption of Hegelianism itself as the original "philosophy of praxis" and counter-hegemonic ideology. Finally, Piccone's book shows how Marxism again has failed to learn and to identify the normative powers built into its own tradition. If history is the suppression of generalizable interests, Marxism has been spared this fate no less than any other ideology.

Florindo Volpacchio

Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier. *The Soviet Union and the Third World*. Praeger: New York, 1983. 188 pages. $23.95.

Carol R. Saivetz and Sylvia Woodby. *Soviet-Third World Relations*. Westview Press: Boulder and London, 1985. 250 pages. $32.50 cloth; $14.50 paper.

Over the last few years a growing body of literature on Soviet-Third World relations has become available. The two books under discussion here represent valuable contributions to the understanding of East-South relations. Both books deal with changing Soviet approaches to the Third World. They trace Soviet interest in the developing

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countries and associate it with the post-Stalin leadership. Both books challenge prevailing views on Soviet behavior in the Third World and provide an excellent overview of Soviet scholarly works on development issues.

Of the two, Valkenier's book is the more interesting because it is more concise and rich. It offers a thorough review of the Soviet literature on academic research and policy decisions regarding their position with the Third World over the last 30 years. The first chapter examines the trade and aid issue. Soviet entry into the markets of developing countries only starts after Stalin's death in 1953. That year, the Soviet Union signed trade agreements with India and Argentina. By 1955, the USSR had staged trade exhibits in some half a dozen countries and participated in a number of international fairs. The Soviet Union launched an aggressive approach to score political victories by promoting the "economic liberation" of developing countries. Under Khrushchev, trade and aid were aimed at cementing close relations with radical and anti-Western newly independent countries. Soviet credits were earmarked to support import-substitution industrialization and the expansion of the state sector.

Soviet aid consisted of credits rather than outright grants. These loans carried low interest rates and were repayable over a period of eight to ten years. Repayments could be made in local currencies or in the form of traditional exports. Soviet aid projects since the mid-1950s were numerous. By 1959, Soviet aid reached $800 million and amounted to $1 billion in 1964. Although the sum is much less than total Western aid, the USSR concentrated it in thirty countries. In some countries, however, Soviet aid was larger than U.S. aid. On the whole, Soviet exports of machinery and equipment were offered at cheaper prices than those of the West and on favorable terms for poor countries. In return, Moscow received raw materials.

Between 1955 and 1964, the share of developing countries in Soviet trade rose from 4.6 to 10.3 percent. As the Soviet Union entered the Third World with a commercially active policy and provided support for the newly independent states, it created alarm in the West. To the extent that this trend was politically motivated, it achieved its objectives. The USSR succeeded in denying the West a monopoly of influence in the Third World. In turn, the Soviet Union was identified as sympathetic to the independent aspirations of the colonized states. Furthermore, the Soviet example helped in raising the level of Western aid, and interest rates on loans were lowered in response to the Soviet challenge.

However, after 1965 a new pattern in Soviet economic relations with the Third World began to emerge. Its predominantly political character shifted in favor of an economic rationale by integrating aid with the expansion of trade. Hence, according to Valkenier, Moscow began to pursue a more evenhanded foreign policy with the Third World based more on need and capability than on revolutionary credentials. Credits were granted for the purchase of Soviet equipment and know-how to promote regular trade. The new loans also carried harder terms than customary 'aid' credits.

In its rivalry with the West, the Soviet Union claimed that its policies sought "to replace the Western-dominated system with a more equitable socialist international division of labor." They professed a willingness to extend long-term aid, to use planning, to import manufactured goods, to guarantee stable and long-term purchases of raw materials, and so on. Although the developing countries' share in total Soviet trade turnover rose, it failed to make any significant breakthrough in the Third World markets. By 1975 the developing countries conducted only 6 percent of their foreign trade with Eastern Europe. Thus, there were considerable gains in absolute terms, but in relative terms the progress was not significant.

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While in the mid-1970s there was a slowdown in East-South trade, East-West trade began to flourish. Soviet aid to the South also began to decrease. Moreover, as a result of their lagging sales in machinery and equipment, the Soviets began to introduce better business practices and even engaged in production cooperation through equity participation. Although the Soviets are not actively involved in the East-West-South tripartite industrial cooperation scheme through equity participation as its East European counterparts are, it is a subject that is being discussed as a means of assuring them a better return for their operations abroad.

Valkenier argues that a fundamental shift from a less politically oriented approach to development problems to a more pragmatic policy became apparent in Soviet development theory and practice. Thus, it is clear that there has been a radical departure from the former Soviet ideological system approach in the Third World. First, it was argued that backwardness resulted from capitalist colonial rule and that the extirpation of capitalist relations was the prerequisite for economic growth. Hence, curtailing relations with the West through nationalizations, comprehensive planning, industrialization, enhancing the role of the State and closer relations with the socialist countries would promote rapid growth.

However, as the former colonies failed to develop, there was a moderate gradualist approach in Soviet thinking based more on economic motivation rather than purely political issues. They were no longer ardent supporters of import-substitution industrialization. The goal was no longer "economic liberation," but stressed rather that the Third World countries should use their comparative advantage as raw materials producers. Thus, Soviet specialists also began to draw attention to the inability of the new states to manage without a Western presence and advised against the total rupture of ties with the former metropoles or the expulsion of foreign capital. Less rigid planning and a slower rate of industrialization became a frequently proposed remedy.

The post-1974 period marked a departure from earlier theories even further as Soviet views became more moderate. The heterogeneity of the Third World seriously questioned the former theory of imperialist exploitation and their acceptance of a global division of labor undermined the question of economic liberation. The need for developing countries to intertwine with the world market (which after all is dominated by the capitalist economies) is now widely accepted in Soviet academic and official circles. Ironically, as Valkenier points out, in the developing countries there is still much controversy over where the benefits of interdependence end and the cost of dependence begins.

While officially Western activities in the Third World are denounced, many Soviet scholars maintain that the operations of neocolonialism have changed. Some specialists argue that one cannot limit the analysis to stressing the negative aspects but that the positive aspects also deserve study. Even the "socialist oriented" states of the Third World, the ones closely allied to the Soviet Union, have been encouraged to preserve the private sector and it is openly admitted that the West provides as much as 70 percent of the aid and credit to many radical regimes.

The last part of Valkenier's book deals with the new international economic order (NIEO). Here she claims that from the outset, Moscow's response to the NIEO in the early 1970s was a warm welcome to the claims of the Third World to discredit the West and to exalt Soviet-Third World relations. However, between the fourth UNCTAD meeting in Nairobi (1976) and the fifth in Manila (1979), a marked difference emerged as Moscow began to voice its objections to the Group of 77's insistence on lumping together capitalist and socialist countries as part of the North and therefore as being

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equally responsible for the plight of the Third World. In turn, the Soviet Union reiterated that it was the industrialized West that was responsible for the ills of the Third World, that Soviet-Third World relations were qualitatively different and that the aim of both socialist and developing countries was to change world economic relations.

At the fifth UNCTAD meeting, the evolving Soviet view on the nature of the international economy was clear — namely, that its global interdependent character reflected Moscow's interest in worldwide economic coexistence rather than confrontation. The Soviets favored the expansion of international trade as largely conditioned by an appropriate specialization among all countries. This basically meant that developing countries should be relegated to producing raw materials. Soviet plans for increased trade with the South show that they will increasingly rely on imports from the Third World for their raw material supply. To put it simply, East-South relations are complementary to East-West relations and the Soviets are playing an intermediate role.

Thus, by the end of the 1970s the Soviets showed a remarkable departure from earlier positions and pressed for the equal treatment of all systems. That is, East-West relations should serve as exemplars for wider application to all Soviet economic exchanges, including those with the Third World. This economic pragmatism of the USSR spawned ideological disagreements with the developing countries. While the Soviets are willing to work within the existing system, serious disagreements with Moscow's closest radical allies have surfaced on the basic principles necessary to reconstruct the international economy. Third World Marxists scorn Soviet moderation and are uncompromising with Moscow's complaisant view of the role of the capitalist system in the world economy.

So far, only the East Europeans have discussed East-South relations more openly and dispassionately. They admit that profit is a motive for East European interest in expanding trade with the Third World. The East Europeans are more trade dependent but the use of the word "profit" for the Soviets is ideologically embarrassing at home and politically damaging abroad. Instead, the use of the term "mutual benefit" is preferred. The East Europeans are also now competing with the Third World for capital resources, credits, and technology from the West, and strive to sell their manufactured goods on Western markets. The implications of these developments are discussed only in East European publications. In essence, they advocate a more active but profitable foreign trade with tangible economic returns through multilateralization and greater opening up to the world economy. By 1982, according to Valkenier, the Soviets began to discuss the need to learn from the East European experience.

Academic analysts at various research institutes in the USSR have expressed that there is no clear-cut consensus on how to respond to the NIEO. In fact, Valkenier points to three Soviet schools of thought dealing with the Third World. These are the ideologues who are now regarded as old-fashioned conservatives, the skeptical realists who came to prominence during the Brezhnev years and now suggest a cautious policy based on cost-benefit analysis rather than ideology. Finally, there are the globalists who have surfaced in the last three or four years and who have become irritated with Third World chauvinism that is critical of both East and West. In her final assessment of this situation, Valkenier says that these currents of analysis should not be overlooked or dismissed. Opinions in most Soviet academic publications reflect the policy-making process.

Soviet-Third World Relations by Saivetz and Woodby, a much longer study than Valkenier's, is an ambitious effort to cover a lot of ground. The book, however, still

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treats the subject skillfully by examining the complex political forces and dynamics of Soviet diplomatic behavior in the Third World. The authors focus on how the USSR has emerged as a major force in the Third World and they emphasize the extension of diplomatic ties, trade, and military agreements.

Saivetz and Woodby first examine the theoretical underpinnings of Soviet Third World policy. In the second part of the book, they analyze aspects of Third World politics that have facilitated Soviet policy objectives. The authors claim that the Soviet Union has pursued its relations with the Third World with a complex variety of goals in mind. Soviet policy in the Third World is not only the product of the Kremlin's aim or perceptions but it is also the result of Third World realities that have affected Soviet attitudes and actions. For instance, local conflicts and political instability have provided openings for Soviet policy. Since the end of World War II, more than 100 countries have gained independence. As champions of the oppressed countries, the Soviets have supported anti-Western and anti-imperialist sentiments within the United Nations and in other fora.

In the fourth chapter, Saivetz and Woodby argue that despite the openings the Soviet Union has encountered in the Third World, it has also faced a number of obstacles. Although Moscow has been seen as a possible alternative source of trade, credits and technology, some Third World states have been reluctant to increase their dependence. At times, domestic political instability has resulted in the overthrow of pro-Soviet leaders or in the sudden shifts of alignment (e.g., Somalia-Ethiopia, Iran-Iraq). The varieties of nationalist ideologies in the Third World sometimes have made local leaders suspicious of Soviet motives. Moreover, the inability of the Soviet Union to provide large amounts of development assistance has become a major obstacle to the consolidation of Soviet Third World relations. Faced with their own economic difficulties, the Soviets are not in a position to satisfy all requests for aid. In short, Soviet involvement in the Third World has also had its setbacks due to Third World obstacles and Soviet vulnerabilities.

Chapter five deals with the policy instruments used by Moscow to achieve its goals in the Third World. These include economic assistance, credits, trade, and military assistance. In the 1950s, economic assistance was used by Khrushchev as a major foreign policy tool. Aid was primarily used to assist public sector development. Under Brezhnev, Soviet policy changed and became more cautious and conservative in dispensing credits. More attention was given to feasibility studies and economic rationales. By 1974, changes in the world economy due to the oil price shock and consequent recession forced the Soviets to change even more. This time, Moscow was more concerned with securing raw materials. In addition, arms transfers began to be used as an alternative policy tool.

The last part of the book deals with Soviet policy-making. In accounting for Soviet behavior, it discusses their objectives in various ways. In trying to maintain ideological authority in the international communist movement, the Soviets have been challenged by the Cubans and the Chinese. In the 1960s, Castro's guerrilla struggle was at odds with Soviet attempts to improve diplomatic and commercial relations with most countries in Latin America. During this time the Chinese had also charged that the USSR was no longer revolutionary but sought moderation and revisionism. Competition to offset Chinese influence has become common since the mid-1960s. These quarrels have split the international communist movement. But since Mao's death, Soviet attitude has become less defensive because the Chinese no longer represent an active leftist challenge.

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During the 1960s and 1970s, the circle of Soviet contacts with the Third World widened considerably. Friendly relations were established with anti-Western regimes. Overall, during this time ideology blended with pragmatism in their approach to all states. Their ideological relativism included sacrificing local communists, and diplomatic pragmatism. Another feature of Soviet Third World relations is the current drive of the USSR for profitable trade beneficial to Moscow. This has translated into dealing with regimes that can hardly be called progressive. Soviet policy has also benefited from the proliferation of radical regimes in the Third World. However, the Soviets are not eager to take on economic responsibility for these regimes. Soviet interaction in the Third World has thus involved several types of relations and levels of commitment. Those who maintain extremely good relations are Cuba, Vietnam and Afghanistan. The next wider circle includes the "socialist oriented states": Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and the Congo (Zaire). Other countries that maintain good relations and that have signed friendship treaties with the USSR are India, Iraq and Syria. Good friends who haven't signed friendship treaties are Algeria, Libya, Nicaragua and Benin. To the extent that the USSR has expanded its relations with 92 countries in the Third World, Moscow has been successful in the range and scope of ties that indicate its global acceptance. However, Moscow has been unable to transform presence into influence. Even with its closest Third World allies control has proven elusive. The Soviet Union is a major factor today in Third World politics but the cost of success has been considerable.

Soviet-Third World relations is a subject that has been inadequately studied. Hence, these two books are valuable contributions as surveys of the changing Soviet perspectives on the Third World. Although critical, Valkenier's book describes well the new trends in Soviet economic relations and traces the evolution of Soviet views of and behavior with the Third World. Saivetz and Woodby examine the ideological prism of Soviet policies and survey the Soviets' global activities in the Third World. Both books merit attention inasmuch as they provide a provocative analysis and to some extent complement each other. All in all, they give a realistic and demystifying synthesis of many important aspects of research from which much more is yet to follow.

Ruben Berrios

Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985. x + 505 pages. $38.50 cloth; $14.95 paper.

In the first, sweeping volume of *The Venture of Islam*, the late Marshall Hodgson recalls the Riddah Wars, fought in the 7th century between the brethren over the right to transmit the *true* legacy of the Prophet. Herbert Marcuse is as far from Mohammed as the deserts of America are from those of Arabia, but since his death in 1979, the familiar archetype has been playing itself out.

At the head of the legions of the faithful rides the indomitable Douglas Kellner, who for years has waged a single-minded campaign to clear the field of competition.[1]

1. Kellner on Jay: "The Frankfurt School Revisited," *New German Critique*, 4 (Winter 1975), pp. 131-152; on "Schoolman on Marcuse," *New German Critique*, 26 (Spring-Summer 1982), pp. 185-201; on Katz, *Telos*, 56 (Summer 1983), pp. 223-229; on everybody else: "Recent Literature on

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Kellner has always concluded his polemics with a promise: the damage these pretenders have wrought is not yet irreversible, consequently, "Marcuse's legacy still awaits comprehensive and systematic treatment," "an adequate appraisal of Marcuse's thought and legacy remains to be done."[2] But the question of whether Kellner has finally managed to fill this void has given way to a larger concern: that *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* may contribute not to the invigoration of the Marcusean moment, but to its degradation.

Kellner's procedure is to go through the whole corpus of Marcuse's published work. Most of the book consists of these discrete summaries, and although one can find points along the way to quibble over — some of them significant — they are substantially accurate. They are also very detailed: the chapter on *Eros and Civilization* summarizes that book for 32 pages and is punctuated by a brief "Critique of *Eros and Civilization*;" the summary of *One-Dimensional Man* runs for 27 pages, followed by a set of "Critical Remarks on Marcuse's Theory of Advanced Capitalism." This endless series of book reports, interspersed with contextual references and capped by criticisms, adds up to what the author calls a "historical-genetic approach" but there is really nothing "historical" or "genetic" about it for reasons that are intrinsic to his thesis.

Underlying his presentation of Marcuse is Kellner's belief that a thinker of such complexity cannot be reduced to a single problematic. Accordingly, he offers a sort of non-interpretation: "In addition to the shifts and developments in Marcuse's thought which I have made a major focus of this study, there are also some constants and continuities in his theory which run through his writings from beginning to end" (p. 365). There is not a single Marcuse, he argues, but a proliferation of them, a whole colony: one worked with Heidegger in Freiburg and another with the Frankfurt School, a third "appropriated psychoanalysis into his project" (there is a *lot* of jargon in his writing) while yet another courted the New Left. There is, to be sure, a family resemblance among all these Marcuses: each is "a champion of human liberation," all of them "saw capitalism as the fundamental source of human oppression and suffering"; they share with one another a "commitment to Hegelian-Marxist dialectics," and together they "preserved the classical role of the philosopher as someone who is concerned with what is important in human life" (pp. 365-66). But fundamentally he presents them as discontinuous with one another, products of discrete historical milieux which explain apparent shifts, vacillations, ruptures, reversals and contradictions between them. My own expectations of a truly "historical-genetic approach" would have been the delination of the intellectual identity of a thinker as it unfolds over time. Kellner, however, sees it as a scrambled canvas of "biography, intellectual history, textual exegesis, philosophical and political analysis, polemical debate, and critical evaluation of both its theoretical and political dimensions" (p. 11).

The format of the book thus merges with the substance of its argumentation. His research has turned up nothing new, with the exception of a quite atrocious letter Marcuse wrote to his friend Maximilian Beck in 1929 in which he ridiculed the female students who attended Heidegger's lectures (pp. 34-35), an excerpt from a 1950-51 course bulletin describing a seminar on "Philosophical and Political Aspects of Psychoanalysis" and advising us of a $10 admission fee (p. 424), and a "revealing" letter

Critical Theory" (with Rick Roderick), *New German Critique*, 23 (Spring-Summer 1981), pp. 141-170.

2. Kellner's last words on Schoolman's *The Imaginary Witness* (*op.cit.*, p. 201), and Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation* (*op.cit.*, p. 229), respectively.

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written in 1960 to Raya Dunayevskaya (pp. 250-51). The substance of the study, then, is to be found in the critical confrontation of Kellner's ideas with those of Marcuse.

The burden of the first chapter is to demonstrate how Marcuse's 1922 doctoral dissertation on the German *Kunstlerroman* "prefigures" (p. 19), "previews" (p. 20), "anticipates" (p. 24), and "foreshadows" (p. 28) his later work. Since Kellner has elsewhere denounced in the most uncompromising terms the tendency to "read the problematic of the later Marcuse into his doctoral dissertation,"[3] tact would require setting this discussion aside and moving on to the next, which deals with the Heidegger episode.

From 1928 until the advent of the dictatorship, Marcuse, as is well known, studied philosophy in Freiburg where his mentors were Husserl and Heidegger, and all commentators have dealt with this important period. For Kellner, the significance of the Freiburg years is to demonstrate that Marxism can emerge intact from a confrontation with phenomenology and existentialism, and Marcuse is treated as a sort of test case. The analysis, then, is not so much concerned with the pathbreaking attempt on the part of the young Marcuse to open Marxism to new impulses and currents of thought, as it is with identifying the thought-crimes into which he was seduced by the charismatic Heidegger. The errors of Marcuse's early "project" (a word to which readers will have to inure themselves) are twofold: "excessive ontological generalization and often extreme subjectivism" (p. 90). Never mind that throughout the rest of the book these unseemly "appropriations" from Heidegger will be lauded as the distinctive and enduring contributions of Marcuse to contemporary radical thought (pp. 279, 317-18, 359, 365 . . .). A transcendent and "ontological" standard of criticism and a concern with the human subjectivity that is submerged in collectivist social theory is what made Marcuse Marcuse and not Marx (or even Heidegger), and despite Kellner's repeated insistence to the contrary, these chapters look finally like an attempt to hunt down and exterminate from Marcuse's thought all heterodox tendencies. The author can rightly point to many passages — especially in his introduction and conclusion — where he asserts his contrary intentions. But to say it is not to do it, and again, readers should be prepared to evaluate his claims against their own reading of the book.

Kellner's detailed summaries of Marcuse's Frankfurt School writings of the 1930s are, as always, largely accurate and dependable — although the originals make for better reading. His critique of them, however, is essentially misconceived. Briefly, Marcuse's *ideologie-kritische* essays of the 1930s are deemed to be "too textual and not socio-historical enough" (p. 114). This is an extraordinary criticism from an author whose putative aim is to demonstrate how Marcuse helped to preserve the vitality of radical thought through a series of "crises of Marxism," for it is generally recognized that one of the decisive contributions of the Frankfurt School was precisely to reawaken interest in the power of intellectual and aesthetic culture — the "derivative epiphenomena of the superstructure," as Marxists used to say — from its deep and dogmatic slumber. Kellner refers to contemporary research into the transmission of ideology, on the "fascist public sphere," and could have easily pointed to a hundred other areas of fruitful research into the origins and functioning of the Nazi state. One could likewise criticize Newton because Einstein demonstrated two centuries later that his theory does not apply very well to extremely small particles. This does not quite diminish the immensity of the original breakthrough (only on the basis of which was the later refinement conceivable).

This curious methodological procedure, which so regularly misses the accomplishment for its limitations, is compounded by a second, which misses the forest for the

3. *Telos*, 56 (Summer 1983), pp. 224-225.

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trees. Although Kellner has repeatedly denounced the "academicizing" of Marcuse, it is hard to see how this 500-plus-page exegesis is somehow not "academic." Professor Kellner's denunciation of academic scholarship thus may appear as little more than an exercise in self-deception, false consciousness, and bad faith. I do, however, object to a presentation that transforms Marcuse into an academic, for however much he may have loved the non-alienated character of intellectual labor, he did not do conventional academic work. Kellner's treatment of *Reason and Revolution* (1941) and *Eros and Civilization* (1955) may illustrate this.

Kellner concludes his discussion of *Reason and Revolution* with the complaint that "Marcuse's appropriation of Hegel's ontology and epistemology is too uncritical," and that serious biographical and philosophical problems in Hegel make him a problematic basis for revolutionary social theory (p. 144). A little later he complains of *Eros and Civilization* that "Marcuse's appropriation of Schiller — like his appropriation of Freud — is selective and rather uncritical" (p. 190). For an academic scholar who has set out to provide a competent secondary source on a major figure, this would be damning criticism indeed. For Marcuse however, who entered the university only when he was already a grandfather and whose originality lay precisely in his irreverent pursuit of progressive tendencies and "hidden trends" wherever they were to be found, it is seriously misplaced. There are many fine and balanced studies of Freud's life and thought; there is only one *Eros and Civilization*.

In the end, the details of Kellner's book so completely overtake the argumentation that only the most devoted readers are likely to have much luck with the book. The microscopic focus on individual texts and on the shifting ground between them prevents a clear understanding of Marcuse's late positions on such important problems as the role of intellectuals, the nature of the working class, and the tactics and strategy of a radical opposition.

Since the book is so long, style will become an issue for any reader willing to see the journey through to the end. Those who are drawn to Marcuse find themselves to some degree seduced by the indefinable eccentricity of his prose. Suffice it to say that for us, his own books remain the best and most lucid account of his ideas. Readers of Kellner's exegesis should be prepared, then, for a taxing ordeal. There is a freight of New Left jargon, including Kellner's apparently serious appeal to a "correct radical position" (p. 283), of throwaway phrases ("He was, in my view, a more sophisticated philosopher than Horkheimer"), and a bizarre literary aberration that permits coded sentences such as the following to abound: "Making this move led Marcuse to shift from favorably appraising high bourgeois art as preserving oppositional and subversive realms of being in *EC*, to a position where he championed the most radical breaks with bourgeois art in *EL*. Then he somersaulted back in *CR&R* and *AD* to champion eighteenth- and nineteenth-century bourgeois art and criticized 'anti-art' that lacks the rigour of aesthetic form" (p. 360).

The greatest single disappointment with Kellner's long-awaited book is that the obscurity of style conspires with the unreflective form, the confusion of method, and the mean-spirited disregard of the work of fellow scholars to rule out a truly important contribution. His own ideas, frequently suggestive, are left undeveloped and the book as a whole rectifies none of the omissions and corrects none of the errors he has pointed to in Marcuse's work. On one of the rare occasions in which he entices us with an original counter-concept, it is only to refer us to another of his essays without indicating the date or place of its publication (p. 195, note 79). This is, perhaps, emblematic of the disturbingly insubstantial character of the whole undertaking.

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I vividly recall Marcuse's consternation when his lecture "Failure of the New Left?" was advertised around Santa Cruz without the all-important question mark at the end: far from an assertion, the evidence as early as 1975 suggested the contrary. But the evidence was not all in, and this is what was decisive. The "failure" or "success" of the New Left depended ultimately on what was *made* of it, not on a scholastic evaluation of its theories and practices executed with the wisdom of historical hindsight. Kellner closes his book on just such a note, but the long chapters that precede undermine the authenticity of his appeal: they provide us with a philosophical *post mortem* rather than a living entry into what he himself calls "Marcuse's Unfinished Legacy."

Barry M. Katz

Ivan Illich. *Gender*. Pantheon Books: New York, 1982.

The emergence of a consumer civilization is associated with the extension of the democratic model to embrace both men and women. But from the gendered viewpoint inherited from past epochs, this democratization may appear as a dissolution. In *Gender*, Illich criticizes this psychosexual democratization, thus establishing himself as one of the most elegant theoreticians of the sexual counterrevolution. Highly idiosyncratic, he differs from other cultural conservatives such as Lasch and Gilder,[1] who criticize the consumerist values of the sexual revolution from a 19th-century, quasi-productivist perspective. Illich criticizes this very perspective for its *modernity*. Collapsing the consumerist into the productivist viewpoint, he presents them as different aspects of the same capitalist civilization. For Illich, the uniqueness of the West resides in this capitalist character. But his capitalism is a demonic, unnatural force that insidiously takes possession of the West and then the world. Illich simply divides world history into two great epochs, one pre-industrial and natural, the other industrial and unnatural. It is in the transition from the pre-industrial to the industrial epoch that Illich "discovers" the dissolution of gender.

But to criticize the dissolution of gender, Illich must redefine it. Normally, gender is seen as the cultural *recognition* of sexual distinctions. Illich goes a step further and defines it as the cultural recognition that sexual distinctions are *incommensurable*. He argues that gender existed only when the categories male and female were perceived to be so distinct that they could not be compared (pp. 20-21). The continued existence of the categories male and female is not in itself enough to constitute gender. It is only their incommensurability that makes them gendered. He presents this incommensurability as a function of pre-industrial culture. But were the sexes ever incommensurable? They were certainly compared in pre-industrial cultures as the widespread practice of female infanticide attests. Illich's formulation of a pre-industrial Golden Age of sexual incommensurability is ahistorical. Just as Hobbes and Locke took the market individualism of the property owner as natural and eternal, so Illich sees the Victorian mythology of the separate spheres of nature. Therefore he reproduces the very ideologies he calls sexist and modern.

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1. For a brief discussion of Illich's conservatism, see Edward Pease, *Encountering Ivan Illich: A Concise Introduction to the Man, His Essential Ideas, and His Unique Learning Center* (Jacksonville, Ill., 1974), p. 13.

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Illich's restricted definition of gender is meant to exempt gender from the egalitarian critique. If the sexes really were incommensurable in pre-industrial cultures, it would be an anachronism to speak of sexual inequality or equality in these cultures. For Illich, sexual equaliy and inequality make sense only in an industrial civilization within which the sexes can be compared. A harmonious pre-industrial gendered order is thus the necessary background for the condemnation of contemporary society as the origin of sexual discord. Industrial society, Illich argues, has established the incommensurable separateness of the sexual spheres in favor of a continuum of the sexes within a single sphere. But implicit in his argument is the assumption that sexual categories will continue to exist even in a genderless industrial civilization. And because he assumes that sexual categories are natural and eternal, Illich denies that the genderlessness of contemporary culture can ever develop into psychosexual democracy. Equality betwen the sexes is a myth. Since he believes that sexual categories can never be transcended, Illich sees solutions to the conflicting relations between the sexes. Since the future cannot abolish the sexes, and the present creates inequality by comparing them, the only possible solution is a return to the gendered past (p. 66).

Engels, invoking the primacy of economics discovered in the 17th and 18th centuries, rooted the inferior status of women in the emergence of private property. Illich, by merely pushing the date ahead, grounds it in the emergence of *capitalist* private property. For Illich, sexual inequality is rooted in the unequal *division of labor* between the masculine sphere of the formal economy and the feminine sphere of the *shadow* or hidden economy both unique to and "equally fundamental in the industrial mode of production." This "shadow work provided a device . . . to degrade a type of activity in which women cannot but predominate [unpaid housework], while it supported one [paid work] that privileged men."[2] But Illich's assumption of separate spheres for each sex subverts his conception of the economy as a *single* sphere within which both sexes compete. The industrial division of labor that Illich describes seems rooted in and a continuation of preindustrial gender. He can derive from capitalism neither the connection between femininity and shadow work nor an explanation for its inferior status. Accordingly, Illich emphasizes the "genderless" character of both formal and shadow work, arguing that within each sphere both sexes compete. Furthermore, women come out second best in both spheres. But this precludes Illich from following his original plan and deriving women's second-rate status under capitalism from the division of labor between the formal and shadow economies. Instead, the second-rate status of women must be rooted in competition. For Illich, any conception of men and women as comparable *humans* is part of an intellectual apparatus that allows both sexes to compete in the same system, consequently dooming women to perpetual inferiority.

Illich's analysis of gender is founded on an erroneous conception of the history of civilization. Despite Illich's "history" of industrial culture, he really does not believe that modern culture has any history. He explicitly rejects the idea that the economy is rooted in the past. Instead, he argues that "for one hundred years, history has fabricated a continuity between the genderless present and the gendered past" (p. 177). Rejecting continuity, Illich stresses the self-generated character of historical epochs. He does not root sexual inequality in the gendered past, and he does not root the gendered past in any social or biological soil.

Illich does not have a history, but a mystery. His system precludes any account of the origins of preindustrial genders. To explain the emergence of the genders is at least to

2. Ivan Illich, *Shadow Work* (Boston, 1981), pp. 22-23.

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include them within a single social system or gender. Thus, Illich dismisses all explanations of gender as manifestations of the "genderless" ideology of capitalism. Rightist sociobiology and leftist social science are equally obnoxious. He condemns these theories because they include the two sexes within a single frame of reference. The sexism of sexual science is not an archaic remnant of a gendered society or a defense against the erosion of gender but, on the contrary, the result of a "genderless" capitalism. Furthermore, Illich *cannot* explicitly substitute his own explanations of gender since any explanation of the origins of gender is single-gendered, and thus "sexist." Gender becomes an ineffable attribute of pre-industrial culture. But precisely because of the impossibility of constructing an explanation of pre-industrial gender as a system of incommensurable sexual differences, one doubts that it exists.

In his conception of capitalism, Illich fails to distinguish between the production-oriented civilization that came into being in the 17th and 18th centuries and the consumer-oriented civilization that emerged in the 19th and 20th. Yet the former effectively excluded women from its conception of the social order, while the latter, by defining the individual as a consumer, extended its definition of society to include women as well as men. By collapsing the neuter concept of the individual that emerged with late capitalism into the older gendered concept of the two spheres that flourished under early capitalism, he builds his paradoxical world in which sexual distinctions coexist within a neuter gender.

By juxtaposing the two, Illich suggests that they arose together and are two sides of the same coin. It is not surprising that Illich uses the emergence of psychoanalysis as evidence that sexual inequality arises only in the context of genderlessness. Illich believes that the concept of the libido exemplifies this genderlessness. Now, Freud had argued that this "libido is invariably and necessarily of a masculine nature, whether it occurs in men or in women." Illich historicizes Freud's thought to the extent that he does not accept it as eternal but merely as a reflection of that capitalist reality under which he subsumes both consumer and the earlier producer civilization. Within the context of Illich's argument, a masculine libido implies that the single 'gender' is a male 'gender' within which women must be second-rate men. But even if Illich does not accept psychoanalysis as eternally true, he does accept it as a coherent ideology. Indeed, he depends on its consistency since he wishes to establish that it accurately reflects the necessary interdependence of genderlessness and sexual inequality created by capitalism (pp. 14, 176). To go beyond Illich's analysis is to reject his notion that epochs can be created out of nothing. Every age contains the remnants of earlier ages. Ideologies, too, contain the remnants of earlier ideologies.

Freud's ideas appear as a compromise between the production-oriented gendered ideology of early capitalism and the genderless ideology of late capitalism. Having discovered the neuter Id, psychoanalysis imposed the older notion of the two sexes as a defense against the dissolution of sex imposed by the Id. Psychoanalysis thus took on a conservative stance against the very tendency it represents. Yet, from the even more conservative position embraced by Illich, psychoanalysis appears subversive.

For Illich, the subjective side of female inferiority is penis envy. To be sure, he rejects the idea that penis envy and female inferiority are eternal conditions and he roots both in capitalism. Only within the context of a genderless capitalist system can one sex compare itself with another and thus envy the other. But this historicization of penis envy actually affirms it. Against Illich, who openly argues that sexual science is an ideology that *creates* the female as a second-rate male, this ideology merely *preserves* the second-rate status of women. For if, on the one hand, the woman is included in society

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as a genderless consumer with a "genderless libido," on the other hand, she is also excluded in memory of past epochs. Baudrillard has spoken of the "imposition of the phallus, the masculine, as the general sexual equivalent."[3] If envy arises from a fixation to a general equivalent, it is precisely the extension of this envy to women that symbolizes their inclusion in society. But the definition of the universal equivalent as phallus preserves the separate sexes and the inferior status of the female sex inherited from previous epochs. If envy implies equality and penis implies subordination, penis envy appears as one more impossible construct of a transitional ideology. Nor did this ideology emerge during the transition to capitalism, but, rather, during the transition to late capitalism. Illich's argument — that capitalism created female inferiority and envy — cannot be accepted as such.

For Illich, the emergence of penis envy reflected the second-rate status of women under capitalism. But he cannot explain why the penis is the universal "equivalent." If female inferiority arises only with capitalism and the integration of the sexes, then there still must be something about women that predestines them to become the *second sex* whenever they are compared with men.

Illich's vision of gender is embedded in a broader vision of the world. The dichotomous nature of this world view gives it its moralistic flavor. Reproducing the error of Modernization theorists and Stalinist reductionists, Illich equates preindustrial Western with Third World civilization. Capitalism stands apart from the rest of human history. Both inequality and the dream of equality appear as the products of this unnatural civilization. For Illich, the emergence of a world economy *created* inequality and envy among formally independent polities by integrating them into one system. This integration was to the disadvantage of certain regions which fell further and further behind, eventually evolving into the "underdeveloped world." With the recognition by this world that it was underdeveloped, a type of envy appears. Capitalist *education* plays an analogous role. By integrating rich and poor children, it imposes a system in which the latter must always fail. The more schooling expands to embrace the poor, the further behind they fall. Poor children become psychologically disadvantaged when they come to understand their scholastic "inferiority." For Illich, then, capitalism's greatest crime has not been exploitation but integration (p. 13).

In the development of his thought from *Deschooling Society* to *Gender*, Illich has simply extended his critique of integration to include sexual integration. Just as his competition between geopolitical regions within the world economy creates inequality, so competition between the sexes within a genderless capitalism creates sexual inequality. By presenting the poor nations and the poor sex as equally victimized by capitalism, Illich is able to give his reactionary arguments a revolutionary *style*.

This style is rooted in the proposition that capitalism is inherently decadent and unnatural. By postulating the categories male and female as eternal categories and by defining gender as a kind of true consciousness of the relation between these categories, Illich is suggesting that the genderless consciousness of capitalist civilizations is false. Genderlessness appears as a *distortion* of the old gendered relations rather than as a *new* relation between the sexes. Illich cannot restrain his enthusiasm for the morally superior gendered cultures of the barrio, the ghetto, the poor, and the Third World. But is Western self-hatred the corrective for Wester arrogance? Is a moral inversion of modernization theory, which retains its fundamental categories, the cure for the follies of modernization theory? Illich simply indulges in a vulgar glorification of the "true

3. Jean Baudrillard, *Mirror of Production* (St. Louis, 1975), p. 136.

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consciousness" of the pre-industrial remnants of the Third World and a heartless rejection of the "false consciousness" of the Western masses. By linking the past and the culture of the oppressed, Illich is able to present his reactionary program as progressive. Once again, political radicalism is allied to cultural conservatism and sexual counterrevolution.

Lawrence Birken

Richard Bernstein. *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis*. Basil Blackwell. Oxford, 1983. xix + 284 pages.

Bernstein's recent book examines the extensive debate on the nature of human rationality. He suggests that this debate is beginning to converge — from the varying perspectives of philosophy of science, hermeneutics, sociology, anthropology, and moral and political philosophy — on a new conception of rationality. This new conception breaks with the standard opposition between *objectivism* and *relativism*, the terms in which the debate has previously been conducted. His reading of the debate attempts to show that some of the participants do not properly belong in either category. A coherent alternative to the standard dichotomy emerges from their contributions and this development may point us to a transcendence of the Cartesian legacy and its search for certainty. Bernstein concentrates on the way this emerging alternative from three different perspectives associated with philosophers such as Kuhn, Gadamer, and Habermas, who are concerned respectively with science, hermeneutics, and *praxis*. Bernstein aims to show that their contributions are compatible, coherent, and mutually enlightening.

He begins his discussion with an examination of post-empiricist philosophy of science. He concentrates on Kuhn's contributions and on the misinterpretations of his work that result from looking at his writings through objectivist spectacles. Bernstein wants to show that science, as described by Kuhn and other post-positivist philosophers of science, shares many crucial characteristics with hermeneutical understanding as practiced in the humanities. This contrasts sharply with the account of science offered by the positivists. They opposed the 'objectivity' of the sciences with the 'subjectivity' of the humanities and ethical discourse. Kuhn argues that the actual practice of science does not match the positivists' account. According to him the criteria used in choosing a theory, such as accuracy, consistency, scope, simplicity, and fruitfulness, function not as *rules* of choice (algorithmically), as suggested by the positivists, but rather as *values* which have to be interpreted and balanced in their application in a way that requires judgment (not just rule following). On the one hand, this is like *phronesis* (practical reasoning) in that "it is a form of reasoning that is concerned with choice and involves deliberation" (p. 54). On the other hand, the choice of theory involves a hermeneutical element because the standards and problems to which the criteria can be applied varies between theories; and, as in hermeneutics, there is no independent perspective from which one can evaluate rival theories.

The positivists interpreted Kuhn's discovery of the similarity between theory choice in science and value discourse as though he meant that science was subjective in the way *they* saw value discourse to be. They accused Kuhn of relativism and irrationalism. Bernstein argues that this interpretation of Kuhn is compounded by the language

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Kuhn uses to describe the process of choosing between rival theories. Kuhn uses the emotivist concepts of *persuasion* and *conversion* that the positivists used to describe ethical discourse. According to Bernstein, however, Kuhn was not advocating the noncognitivism of the emotivists, but was concerned with describing the forms of *rational persuasion* employed in scientific argumentation which convinces by offering *good reasons* for preferring one theory over another. These reasons are not different in kind from those standardly applied. What Kuhn is questioning is the idea that there must be some univocal outcome of the decision procedure. For Kuhn, when scientists have to decide which of the two (or more) rival theories is better, they are very much placed in a situation of *choice*. The positivists make the mistake of equating the absence of a determinate outcome from this decision process with a complete lack of constraint. That is, they interpret it as meaning that any choice is as good as any other and so the process is arbitrary. Kuhn is trying to show that, on the contrary, although there are constraints, they are in many (if not most) situations insufficient to *fully* determine the outcome. The constraints do mean, however, that some outcomes are clearly better than others.

Essential to Kuhn's explanation of the indeterminacy of theory choice is his incommensurability thesis. Bernstein argues that Kuhn's critics (and defenders) have confused and conflated *incommensurability* with *incompatibility* and *incomparability*. It is assumed that Kuhn is arguing that rival paradigm theories are all three. Bernstein disputes that interpretation. He argues that Kuhn's incommensurability thesis is directed against three central positivistic theses. According to Bernstein Kuhn is arguing that rival theories are logically *incompatible*. Kuhn is also arguing that although rival theories are *incommensurable*, they are nevertheless *comparable*. The incommensurability thesis is designed to show not that rival theories cannot be compared but that such comparison may not produce an immediately conclusive outcome or even an agreement on what sort of evidence would resolve the dispute.

In his consideration of the incommensurability thesis Bernstein slides from a discussion of the *practice* of science, in which *scientists* must evaluate and choose between incommensurable rival theories, to a discussion of the *understanding* of science, in which *philosophers* seek to understand widely varying and historically separated incommensurable past and current practices, all of which we call science. With the demise of the positivist's view of science, the philosopher's task can no longer be seen as simply an exercise in applied logic. Something other is required when the tradition is seen to include incommensurable paradigms. Bernstein examines Feyerabend's argument that the philosopher of science must work somewhat like an anthropologist seeking to understand an alien culture. Bernstein finds that the sort of approach both Feyerabend and philosopher-anthropologists such as Peter Winch and Clifford Geertz are advocating "parallels many of the standard descriptions of hermeneutics" (p. 88).

If it is clear that Feyerabend and Kuhn do not expect scientists to be hermeneuticists, it is not so clear that Bernstein shares this expectation. Bernstein has argued that it is the *incommensurability* of theories, traditions, and practices that makes hermeneutics necessary for understanding. The fact that scientists do not examine their history is not enough, on this account, to rule out hermeneutics as a part of scientific practice. Indeed, it is hardly plausible, if hermeneutics is needed to *understand* rival theories, that scientists could undertake a rational *comparative evaluation* of rival theories if they did not understand each of the rivals — and hence had not employed hermeneutics.

Certain problems in Bernstein's account of hermeneutics make clear the confusion that is the source of this ambiguity in his account of science. Bernstein concentrates on

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Gadamer's discussion of hermeneutics. This is primarily concerned with the interpretation of the texts, but the insights Gadamer obtains there are extended "to all that no longer expresses itself in and through its own world" (quoted in Bernstein, p. 112). Gadamer wants to show that judgments about works of art in particular make claims to knowledge and truth that are different from but just as serious as such claims in science. He argues that it does not make sense to analyze the knowledge we get from our understanding of art in the positivist terms of "the object versus the subject." This makes it seem that so-called knowledge is merely what the subject *thinks* about the object, not what the object itself is. But this is to misrepresent what goes on when we interpret, understand, and judge works of art. Works of art are not merely objects, they are an attempt to communicate and as such make claims on us. Communication presupposes shared understanding.

This discussion brings to the fore the role of prejudgments, or prejudices, as Gadamer calls them, in understanding and interpretation. Without this background, knowledge and pre-existing expectations *on both sides* there would be no communication. Just as Gadamer challenges the Cartesian notion that reason and truth can be separated from prejudice, he also questions whether reason and truth can be separated from authority and tradition. According to Gadamer, the essence of authority is the recognition of superior knowledge and/or judgment. Just as we cannot reason without prejudice, so we cannot reason without tradition. The rejection of all tradition would require the rejection of all prejudice, and as it has been argued: prejudices can be revised but not done without altogether.

The problem for hermeneutics is how can a text communicate with us when shared pre-understandings, prejudices and traditions cannot be assumed. Gadamer argues that the application of the text to ourselves in hermeneutics is *analogous* to the relation Aristotle describes between *phronesis* and *praxis*. As Bernstein points out, *phronesis* presupposes "a community in which there is a living, shared acceptance of ethical principles and norms" (p. 157). *Phronesis* is nevertheless necessary in such a situation because "the shared acceptance of ethical principle and norms" is not enough to provide a concrete guide to action. As in the case of rival scientific theories, accepted norms and principles can come into conflict.

Bernstein rightly points out that in the modern world, it cannot be assumed (because by and large it is not true) that there is a shared acceptance of norms and principles (p. 157). This means the preconditions for *phronesis* do not necessarily exist; it does not mean, however, that the preconditions for hermeneutics are absent. Hermeneutics takes place when shared pre-understanding is absent. What both *phronesis* and hermeneutics *do* require is the practical possibility of dialogue.

Habermas and Gadamer, like Aristotle, see participation in genuine dialogue as constitutive of our being. A question they both ask, however, is what prevents this being a practical possibility in the modern world? Bernstein rightly rejects Gadamer's answer, blaming "a domination of technology based on science" (quoted in Bernstein, p. 418). Bernstein argues that the real enemy of dialogue is *domination*, not *techne*.

Following Habermas, Bernstein emphasizes "the forms of purposive-rational action and power that affect social interactions" and systematically distort dialogue and communication (p. 190). However, Habermas, like Gadamer, also fails to take full account of the post-empiricist philosophy of science. Habermas not only argues (reasonably) that "anyone acting communicatively must, in the performing of a speech action, raise universal validity claims and suppose they can be vindicated or redeemed"; he also assumes that not only is agreement on valid norms the goal of com-

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municative action, but that it is also always in principle possible (pp. 145-146). If Habermas were right, then the *only* thing preventing unanimous agreement on what are valid norms are the power, domination and strategic action that distort communication. This fails to take seriously the realization made in post-empiricist philosophy of science that when there is discourse between rational participants with incommensurable positions, rational resolution of conflict may not be possible. In other words, disputants can *rationally* disagree. This is not a problem for science because consensual action is not required (though it may cause problems for technologists). It need not be a problem in the moral-practical sphere, either, where consensual *action* is required. It is possible for people to agree on *what* should be done without necessarily agreeing on *why*.

Arendt, in contrast — with her objectivist characterization of truth as 'coercive, compelling, and tyrannical' — argues that "action and politics are threatened" if "we fail to acknowledge the irreducible plurality and variability of opinions that are to be tested, purified, and validated [but not necessarily eliminated] through reciprocal argumentation" (pp. 221-222). Bernstein disagrees with this conclusion of the irreducibility of opinions and suggests that Arendt has underestimated the importance of the concept of *argumentation* for her own understanding of *judgment*. According to Bernstein argumentation "does not make any sense unless there is some common acceptance of what is to count in support of, or against an opinion. Without the possibility of a potential agreement that can be backed by reasons, argumentation, as the positivists and emotivists have claimed, is 'pseudo argumentation' " (p. 222). It is at this point that Bernstein himself falls afoul of the objectivism he is attempting to exorcise. Due at least in part to his conflation of hermeneutics and *phronesis*, he fails to take note of the full import of the arguments in the post-empiricist philosophy of science concerning incommensurability. It is just Kuhn's point that disputes between scientists from incommensurable paradigms *can and do proceed without agreement on what counts "in support of, or against, an opinion."* Such disputants do *not* necessarily reach agreement. They can, however, *rationally argue*, and it is sometimes possible for one or other to persuade the other of the respective merits (or lack thereof) of a particular position. It is implausible to think that participants in a normative dispute can (must) in principle do better.

It is this *residual objectivism* in Bernstein that leads to difficulties with his final conclusion. Bernstein argues that there is a "common vision," or a coherent conversation that emerges from the works of Kuhn, Gadamer, Habermas and Arendt. He sees in it, however, "something problematic and paradoxical" (p. 225). He argues that "the anticipation of undistorted communication and the reciprocal redemption of normative validity claims" *presupposes* "that the shared understandings and experience, intersubjective practices, sense of affinity, solidarity, and those tacit affective ties that bind individuals together into a community must already exist" (p. 226). However, according to him, "we realize that today the type of dialogical communities that are required for [the] flourishing [of practical discourse] are being distorted, undermined, and systematically blocked from coming into existence" (pp. 230-231). This conclusion leads to the depressing question: if this is true, what hope is there of either going beyond objectivism and relativism (which Bernstein argues is a practical task, not merely a theoretical problem) or of realizing practical discourse. However, Bernstein's conclusion that the movement beyond objectivism and relativism "gains 'reality and power' only if we dedicate ourselves to the practical task of furthering the type of solidarity, participation, and mutual recognition that is founded in dialogical communities" (p.

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231) does not seem adequate if it is accepted — as Bernstein suggests — that "the very conditions of social life have the consequence of furthering" the "breakdown of such communities" (p. 226).

I wish to argue that the inadequacy of Bernstein's conclusion results from his failure to distinguish between modern communities in which dialogue requires the practice of *hermeneutics* from the sort of communities Aristotle wrote about in which dialogue required the practice of *phronesis*. Bernstein's confusion over the sort of community that is both possible and desirable in the modern world is not surprising given his equation of hermeneutics with *phronesis*.

Now in traditional societies, such as those familiar to Aristotle, the norms of such a community are not in question *so there is no need for hermeneutical discourse to validate them.* All that is required in traditional communities is discourse of "judgment" or *phronesis*. It is only when strangers, who have no "shared understandings and experience," etc., wish (or need) to act together that the validity of norms (and hence their direction of action) cannot be assumed, making practical (hermeneutical) discourse necessary if *uncoerced* collective action is to be possible. What Bernstein sees as being presupposed by such discourse in fact preempts it.

Bernstein further argues that "unless individuals *already* have had the experience of confronting each other as equals and share a sense of what public freedom means, they will not be able to act together" (p. 225, emphasis added). I would argue that, on the contrary, it is when individuals *try* to act together, in circumstances where the means of coercion are absent and cannot be admitted, that they *discover* the need to treat others as equals if they are to gain their cooperation. It is the necessity of acting together with others without the use of coercion that engenders the respect presupposed by dialogue. When there is an absence of shared norms guiding action, hermeneutical discourse is required to produce sufficient understanding for agreement to be reached on *what* should be done (although participants need not necessarily agree on *why* it should be done). Hermeneutical discourse can lead to *understanding* of another with an incommensurable normative framework.

Bernstein sees the absence of a pre-existing shared understanding in modern societies as grounds for despair; I would argue that this is in fact a ground for hope. Domination in modern societies is not so fully legitimated by shared norms as in traditional societies and so more often exposes itself as unlegitimated coercion — thereby generating resistance. But those resisting or opposing coercion do not necessarily share norms either. In this case, if they are to resist effectively — that is, together — they must first engage in hermeneutical discourse to reach understanding and agreement on what should be done. It becomes clear that in the modern world, where "shared understandings and experiences" don't exist, we must either engage in *hermeneutical* discourse or be faced with the prospect of being forced to comply with unlegitimated domination and live in terror.

Bernstein's confusion of *hermeneutics* with *phronesis* leads him to an inadequate understanding of modern society. His celebration of the sort of (neo-traditional) community based on *phronesis* is misguided given the nature of the modern world. In the context of this confusion his use of the concepts 'practical discourse' and 'dialogical communities' is ambiguous and misleading rather than illuminating. And his failure to incorporate hermeneutics (independently of *phronesis*) in his conception of praxis makes it impossible for him to provide a satisfactory solution to the problem of objectivism and relativism in the modern world.

Karey Harrison

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Cornelius Castoriadis. *Crossroads in the Labyrinth.* MIT Press. Cambridge, Mass., 1984.

D'Amico's review of Castoriadis' *Crossroads in the Labyrinth (Telos,* 60) can be taken as a negative example of one of the book's central theses: namely, that there exists an intimate connection between sublimation and truth. In D'Amico's case, there is little of either. One is struck by the vehemence of the attack and wonders about the source of its unmediated anger. I am usually reluctant to make psychologizing arguments in public controversies. However, in this case, I feel justified in asserting that only extra-theoretical factors can account for the tone and character of the review. Whatever these factors may have been, they apparently prevented the reviewer from taking up the work in a serious fashion, as reflected not only in the failure to grapple with central theoretical issues, e.g., the nature of "elucidation," but in the failure to fulfill the basic requirements of scholarship as well. Indeed, at times one wonders whether he gave the book more than a cursory reading. For example, in describing the book, D'Amico observes that *Crossroads* "is essentially divided into two sections" (p. 194) when in fact it is divided into three — *Psyche, Logos* and *Koimonia*. This is not only a trivial mistake but one that betrays a total lack of appreciation for the inner organization of the work at hand. D'Amico also criticizes Castoriadis for not having considered the works of Lakatos or Feyerabend — works that were written after the essay in question! To make matters worse, Castoriadis appended a footnote to the English translation acknowledging relevant work that post-dated the original publication of his article in French and which referred specifically to Lakatos (*Crossroads,* note 23a, p. 226).

As D'Amico mainly argues by innuendo in this review, I can only speculate about the more strictly theoretical sources of his animosity toward Castoriadis. The scattered bits of evidence in the text indicate that D'Amico is not simply objecting to particular doctrines of Castoriadis', but is rejecting his entire mode of philosophizing as such. It would appear that D'Amico presupposes the essential validity of a (for lack of a better term) post-modernist perspective from which he finds Castoriadis' more traditional and ambitious form of philosophizing objectionable *per se* and *passé*. Thus, in a typically post-modernist vein — which assumes the unsurpassability of a plurality of local language games, *epistemes,* paradigms, etc. — D'Amico criticizes Castoriadis' very ambition of providing a comprehensive account of knowledge: "Castoriadis, for all of his effort at criticism, never seems to question the deep philosophical project of finding a single source or basis for all knowledge. The very epistemological question of accounting for or explaining knowledge is loaded with metaphysical baggage." And despite Castoriadis' groundbreaking critique of Marx, D'Amico views his residual Marxism as another source of the difficulty. To the extent that Marxism has retained its totalizing impulses, it is essentially continuous with the philosophical tradition it has supposedly surpassed: "What is left of the old leftism is the encyclopedic range which demands that everything be subsumed under a single theoretical analysis" (p. 193).

In contrast to Castoriadis' more serious and rigorous mode of theorizing which is "expressed in a kind of high German metaphysical diction" and "strives for profundity," D'Amico would apparently counterpose a thinker such as Lacan, whose "fascination with language and texts . . . is used ironically, not as an effort to think big thoughts but to poke analytic fun at intellectual constipation" (pp. 96-97). This contrast is one instance of a larger generic opposition which is becoming increasingly familiar these days: systematic philosophy, Kant, Hegel, and Habermas and *l'esprit des serieux*, on the

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one side, versus deconstructionist philosophy, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Derrida and *l'esprit de la jouissance* on the other. This seems to be one of the central oppositions on the contemporary philosophical and cultural scene. The point is, however, that the question is far from having been decided, as D'Amico assumes. He presupposes the self-evident victory of the "post-modernist position" and dismisses Castoriadis' position as hopelessly "quaint." What D'Amico fails to realize is that, if Castoriadis' position is "loaded with metaphysical baggage," so is his own — that of a pluralistic, localistic, discontinuous ontology. The point would be to move beyond the level of "mere assertions" and debate the important questions involved.

Vituperation, however, is not equivalent to serious argument. To be sure, D'Amico raises several "counter-examples," which often miss the point, against Castoriadis' argument. *However, he never makes the effort to understand Castoriadis' philosophy from the inside, which is always a prerequisite for serious criticism.* Hegel bequeathed us the lesson that any philosophy worth taking up at all is worth understanding from within. D'Amico's unwillingness to enter into Castoriadis' thinking is perhaps most apparent in his quick dismissal of the central notion of "elucidation." Rather than making the effort to explicate its meaning from the text, D'Amico simply asks for an *a priori* definition or clarification. This was a favorite ploy of the old positivists, which allowed them to appear tough-minded while avoiding the hermeneutical effort of understanding a foreign position. But we should know from Hegel again that it is inappropriate to ask for an *a priori* definition in the case of central philosophical terms whose meaning can only be grasped in the working out of the concept. Indeed, I shall attempt to show that there is a similar activity of elucidation that occurs in Castoriadis' analysis of language, psychoanalysis and science.

One of the chapters of *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* itself consists in a review of a book by Roustang, a former Lacanian analyst, entitled *Dire Mastery*. The book is an attempt to come to grips with Lacanianism, and Castoriadis uses it as an occasion to evaluate the entire Lacanian development. The way in which Roustang attempts to rationalize the aberrations of the Lacanian movement is to claim they were inevitable. Assimilating the Lacanian experience to the admittedly unsettling record of the early psychoanalytic movement, he maintains that the sort of degeneration suffered by the Lacanians is intrinsic to such groups. His *in principle* point is that all such groups are in fact equivalent to their essence, which is the primal horde; all apparent instances of sublimation, civility and maturity are just that, apparent, and are reducible to their primitive origins. The argument could easily be extended to radical groups as well. Indeed, the so-called organizational question on the left could be formulated as follows: How can groups that aim at the political and cultural transformation of society avoid reproducing if not exaggerating the pathologies of the larger society? Roustang's answer is they cannot; we are lashed to the weary wheel of repetition compulsion.

Castoriadis succeeds quite convincingly in refuting the in principle argument and in accounting for Roustang's fixation at the master-slave relation. This refutation, however, leaves the empirical argument untouched. While all groups that aim at the political and cultural transformation of society are not fated *a priori* to degenerate into a primal horde of sorts, many in fact do. Only a naif — and not one who had been around the left for years — could claim otherwise. Sublimation is always a fragile achievement and a difficult one to preserve. It seems to me that knowledge of the regularity with which sublimation has failed historically, both in psychoanalysis and on the left, ought to engender a healthy respect for its always fragile character. Without this I do not see how anything can change. It is in this context that I find D'Amico's

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review so disheartening. It is a dreary repetition of the worn polemics masquerading as critical thinking. The "spirit of negativity" is too often confused with hurling insults. And, unfortunately, D'Amico seems more interested in insulting Castoriadis than in criticizing him.

Take the following inexcusable passage. "In a political version of the old biological cliché 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny' Cornelius Castoriadis seems to embody in his personal evolution fetal stages in the labor pains of the left since World War II. According to Dick Howard in *The Marxian Legacy,* Castoriadis was a youthful member of the Greek Communist Party where opposition to Stalinism led him to Trotsky. After the war and the resistance he emerges in Paris studying philosophy and cuts his political teeth on the splits and schisms within the political fantasy world of the IV International. He founds *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, abandons Trotskyism, moves through the Western Marxist tradition and after more splits and more journals, he ends up, after May '68, a practicing psychoanalyst. There may be a lesson in all this but I fear it is not what Howard calls Castoriadis' 'logical steps.' At any rate, from the evidence Castoriadis seems to have combined criticism of bureaucracy, both West and East, with high revolutionary activism. One of the epigrammatic statements of this period, according to Howard, is 'not to deduce the revolution but to make it.' Apparently having failed as either the Euclid or Lenin of the post-war left, Castoriadis' work marks a decided wane in revolutionary enthusiasm" (p. 193). It is not exactly clear what D'Amico would have Castoridis apologize for in all of this. Would he have preferred it if Castoriadis had become a high-ranking functionary in the Communist Party? Or should he have utilized his training as an economist and gone to work for a multinational corporation? Or, perhaps becoming a philosophy professor in the more constricted world of the academy would have been better? And what precisely is objectionable about having founded one of the best and most innovative journals on the left in the post-war era? In fact, if one wants to employ the biological metaphor, D'Amico got it exactly backwards: On many important issues, Castoriadis' "ontogeny" dramatically anticipated the rather inert development of the left by a goodly number of years. In some cases, the left is only catching up today.

As Catoriadis is probably best known for his political writings than for his more strictly philosophical work, let me say a word to locate the latter. In the first place, the publication of the translation of his books into English has been peculiar. The English translation of his major philosophical work, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (forthcoming from M.I.T. Press) will follow the English-language edition of *Crossroads in the Labyrinth.* And while *Crossroads* can stand on its own, it represents in many important respects an elaboration of the ideas in *The Imaginary Institution of Society* so that the reader would certainly benefit from an acquaintance with the earlier book.

Secondly, I would like to situate Castoriadis' philosophical concerns within the thematics of current Anglo-American philosophy. Strange as it may sound, I believe we are in a particularly opportune point in the development of philosophy today. Although we may be confronted by nothing but a series of apparent dilemmas, and although we may possess no consensus regarding their resolution, an unusual degree of lucidity nevertheless exists concerning the nature of the impasse and the various options open to us. The parties to the debate — the critical theorists, post-structuralists, neo-realists, hermeneuticists, Wittgensteinians, etc. — at least possess an understanding of what is at stake in their own positions relative to their opponents', which is unprecedented in the recent past. Most importantly, with the dissolution of the old certainties, the various schools are engaging one another in a way that would

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have been unimaginable just 20 years ago. This new fluidity of the traditional boundaries results in large part from the concurrent breakdown of two programs without the resolution of the problems that either were intended to resolve. On the one hand, the fact and influence of modern science and its technological derivatives remain, despite the dissolution of the old positivism that was meant to explain and justify them. On the other, the social, political, and cultural crisis of modernity unfolds unabated, while both the liberal and Marxist responses (which were not that different to begin with) have revealed their bankruptcy. Though not reassuring, this situation could prove a fertile stimulus to thought.

One point where a certain clarity has emerged concerns the two poles that delimit the problematic of contemporary philosophy. At the one pole, we encounter various forms of foundationalism and objectivism that often attempt to purchase objectivity and the validation of fundamental norms at the price of ahistoricism and the eradication of meaning; the risk here is of course unreflective dogmatism. The other pole consists in the varieties of relativism and historicism, which are more concerned with unmasking the conceits of rationalism and doing justice to the historical and preconceptual dimensions of human thought and existence than with justifying basic epistemological and ethical norms; the danger in this case is obviously an "everything goes" nihilism. That the surpassing of this opposition has become the concern of various and divergent philosophical schools is evident in the titles of two recent and influential books in American philosophy: i.e., *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis*, by Richard Bernstein, and *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow. And it is precisely in reference to this problematic that Castoriadis locates his own philosophical efforts: "There is, certainly, the *factum* of experience or of knowledge. But equally, and quite as importantly, there is the *factum* of error (I am not speaking of mistakes in calculation) and, above all, of uncertainty. And there is the *factum* of the mutual involvement of these two. It is a paltry illusion to believe that they can be separated simply, clearly, neatly. It is an equally paltry illusion to believe that anything goes. Between them, these two illusions virtually monopolize the contemporary scene: on the one hand, positivism, scientism, rationalism, structuralism; on the other, irrationalism, naive relativism, and hasty and superficial denunciations of 'Science' and 'Knowledge.' They both spring from the same puerile belief that some day we shall escape from the question of truth, either by resolving it once and for all, or else by declaring it void of meaning" (p. xiii).

Castoriadis' central term "elucidation" is intended, then, to designate a mode of thinking that provides an alternative to both objectivism and relativism. The activity of elucidation begins with the uneliminable fact that *thinking* — as opposed to scientific *theorizing* — always occurs *in medias res*; thinking, that is, always occurs from a particular standpoint in history and from within the pre-existing, transpersonal web of ordinary language which is irreducibly multivocal. This means that, against objectivist foundationalism, no standpoint is available outside history that could serve as a guarantor of the objectivity of our knowledge. And, while the multivocalness of meaning can be temporarily suppressed for limited technical activities, e.g., the practice of so-called normal science, it sooner or later reasserts itself, indeed with the problem of foundations themselves. As against the relativist, however, this does not mean that we are totally adrift and have no guideposts or orientation for our thinking. Because no standpoint is accessible outside history, it does not follow that we cannot illuminate our position and things *to a significant extent* beginning from the middle of things. And,

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likewise, because the over-determination of ordinary language cannot be reduced to a totally unequivocal calculus, it does not follow that we are left with a meaningless cacophony. I would like to examine three cases of this two-pronged activity of elucidation *in concreto*: Castoriadis' analysis of 1) language; 2) psychoanalysis, and 3) science.

1) *Language*. Castoriadis' attempt to stake out this "in between" terrain can be observed in his discussion of language which occurs largely in a tribute to Merleau-Ponty entitled "The Sayable and the Unsayable." Castoriadis' objections to absolutist foundationalism and radical relativism are not only the well-known traditional ones, namely, that absolutist foundationalism cannot avoid some form of infinite regress in attempting to establish its foundations, and that relativism cannot avoid the problem of self-reference in making its relativist assertions. To be sure, he cites these traditional objections, but he is concerned primarily with a point which is perhaps less often appreciated — that, in the final analysis, absolutist foundationalism and radical relativism amount to the same thing. Thus, with the case of relativism, "it is not only, and not mainly, that relativism 'contradicts itself.' The point is that relativism, unless it contents itself with stuttering and stammering, is always absolutism. It claims to be capable of dealing exhaustively with its subject matter by enumerating the relations in which this is enfolded" (p. xxiii). The point is that, for Castoriadis, both eradicate, albeit in opposite directions, the possibility of meaning, radical creation and truth (conceived of in anything but a formal manner). Thus, on the one side, the existence of meaning is denied by reducing the multivocal thickness of ordinary language to the univocality of formal language, of creativity by reducing the spontaneous use of *parole* to the atemporal conditions of *langue*, and of truth by reducing the gap between speech and that which is spoken about to the conditions of speakability. And, on the other side, the possibility of meaning is eliminated either by dissolving the thickness of ordinary language into complete opacity or by locating the site of meaning beyond the realm of the expressible in the realm of the intuitable (whatever that might mean); the possibility of authentic creation is eliminated by conflating creativity with the mere caprice; and the possibility of truth is eliminated by construing the gap between the spoken and what is to be spoken about as absolute.

Let us begin with an examination of what Castoriadis calls, borrowing the term from Merleau-Ponty, "the algorithmic." Given when and where the article was written, the main target of the criticisms were undoubtedly the structuralists, however the arguments can certainly be applied to other formalistic schools as well. Castoriadis' main thesis is the following: While the formal, supraindividual and arguably even atemporal dimension of language provides the preconditions for the expressive use of language, it only provides the preconditions and does not *determine* the expressive use of language *exhaustively*. A *gap*, in other words, exists between the formal collective features of language and any given act of expression. Thus, for example, "there is certainly an immanent pre-ontology in the Greek language, which animates and organizes it; but to investigate it will not help us to understand why Democritus is not Parmenides, or in what way Aristotle differs so profoundly from Plato." This brings us directly to Castoriadis' crucial notion of the, as it were, two-fold gap of underdetermination. The first gap, with which we are dealing here, pertains to the relation between the general structure of thought and language to individual thought and speech. The second gap, which will be examined later in this section and in the discussion of science below, concerns, in turn, the relation between the world and the general structures of language and thought. Complete continuity between the general structures of language and thought and individual speech and thinking would rule out the creative use of speech and

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genuine subjectivity; likewise, complete continuity between the world and the structures of language and thought would exclude the possibility of knowledge except as a reflex of the world (e.g., as with Vulgar Marxism) and of scientific discovery.

With respect to the foregoing example, then, it is not only the case that the "immanent preontology" of the Greek language does not determine completely the thinking of the Greek philosophers. It is also the case that the philosophers themselves transformed that language through their appropriation of it: "While it is true that the writings of these philosophers are monuments which provide us material access to the linguistic treasure, it is also they who have formed this language which has formed them" (p. 133). For Castoriadis, the creativity of the genius consists precisely in his ability to think "other figures of the thinkable" (p. xx) or, to put it in linguistic terms, to say other figures of the sayable. In so doing, they not only say something radically original from within the structure of the thinkable and sayable, but also illuminate something about the limits of that structure itself. And, as Hegel argued, to delineate limits is already to begin to transform them, so that this act of illumination may itself alter the bounds of the thinkable and sayable. (With this last speculation I am going beyond Castoriadis' explicit text, but I do not believe the proposition is inconsistent with his general argument.)

Let us turn, then, to the problem from the other side, from the side of the "ineffable," where the task is to account for the moment of continuity in the two-fold gap of underdetermination. Which is to say, while the "being-thus of the world does not impose an absolute organization on language," the relationship between the extralinguistic world and language cannot be one of utter contingency. If this were the case, it would be impossible to account for the fact of knowledge. Similarly, while language "does not impose an absolute expression on the subject" (p. 133), it does impose some constraint and order. Otherwise, we could not account for the fact of communication; indeed, the linguistic skeptic could not communicate his skeptical claim. The facts of knowledge and communication, in other words, enjoin us from thinking the world as a mere indeterminate manifold and compel us to conceive the knowing and speaking subject in certain determinate terms. As this proposition indicates, a strong pre- or post-Kantian element — depending on how one views it — exists in Castoriadis' thinking, which constitutes one of its more controversial features and which shall appear again in the discussion of science.

Castoriadis' claim is even stronger than might at first be apparent. For he is not simply arguing that the world must meet certain formal and transcendental conditions to be knowable and articulatable, i.e., he is not simply arguing that the empirical object must be compatible with the transcendental object: "We are not concerned here simply with some limiting conditions, nor the thought of 'that without which'." Rather, he is referring to the makeup of the actual, empirical world, which must be constituted in such a way as to be amenable not only to the imposition of language in general on it, but to the imposition of a variety and a succession of linguistic-conceptual frameworks as well: "Whatever autonomous power may be attributed to language (to thought) in organizing the world, still the fact that world is spoken (thought) proves that it is organizable." Thus, with respect to the familiar example of the spectrum of light, which is often cited as evidence for linguistic relativism, Castoriadis argues that the analysis is generally not carried far enough. Granted, it is true that divisibility of the spectrum in a variety of ways in different languages establishes the case for linguistic relativity. It is also true, however, that this very fact points to the existence of a continuous spectrum: "This is an important example provided one examines its full

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significance: the possibility of these different divisions is provided by the quasi-continuity of the visible spectrum. . . . It would not be possible to divide it one way or the other if there were not an extralinguistic unity of colored-being, if colors did not hold together: what is divided is, precisely *the* visible spectrum" (p. 125). The concrete being-thus or the world (e.g., the continuity of the spectrum), in short, allows for the imposition of only a determinate set of semantic grids on it, which needless to say, are not specifiable *a priori*. The autonomy of language is relative, not absolute.

2) *Psychoanalysis.* One way in which contemporary forms of skepticism often differ from their historical predecessors, however much they may share the same structures of argument, involves the fact that the contemporary version has Freud's discoveries regarding the unconscious at its disposal. In this context, Otto Fenichel's dictum, "The subject matter of psychoanalysis is irrational, the method is rational,"[1] is often disregarded in the attempt to enlist psychoanalysis in the cause of contemporary forms of irrationalist philosophy. Indeed, Freud's discovery of the depths of irrationality in human life is not used to motivate its mastery, as he intended; on the contrary, Freud's rationalism is dismissed as a relic of an earlier era, and his discoveries are turned against him in the attempt to demonstrate that the rational in human affairs is a mere chimera. Let me point out that the defense of a more rationalist account of the psychoanalytic enterprise does not only result from a "partiality for reason" to use Habermas' phrase — although it does that as well. It also results from the fact that the whole theory and practice of psychoanalysis is incoherent, as Castoriadis exhaustively shows in his *reductio ad absurdum* of Roustang and Lacan.

One place where these problems are posed with particular acuity is in the question of the resolution of the transference. In that question, the problems of truth and autonomy (and sublimation) come together in an unmistakable manner. What is the transference but the displacement of infantile ideas and feelings onto persons in the present, and in particular onto the person of the analyst? Epistemologically, as it were, this means that, to the extent that the transference dominates experience, our apprehension of reality will be distorted by schemas from the past, and insofar as Freud equated infantilism with pathology, by our psychopathology. And, with respect to social relations, to the extent that we are under the sway of the transference, we will be unable to treat ourselves or others as autonomous adults; our representations of ourselves and others will be filtered through parental *imagos* so that we will continue to perceive the world through the eyes of a child. The resolution of the transference, then, is an essential condition for the undistorted apprehension of reality and for the establishment and maintenance of mature autonomous relations. And, conversely, if the transference is indeed unresolvable, we would be forever excluded from a relationship to the truth and fated to perpetual immaturity with all the pain that entails. While Roustang makes his arguments with respect to so-called training analyses, I believe they can be (and are meant to be) extended not only to the resolution of the transference in analysis, but to the possibilities for autonomy in life in general. After all, if an analyst cannot be expected to resolve his or her transference problem, who can?

Roustang's point of departure is, of course, Lacan and the degeneration of the Lacanian movement. As was mentioned above, he attempts to assimilate this case to the case of the early psychoanalytic movement to demonstrate that the transference can never be resolved and that such groups are in essence no different than the savage horde. He thereby wants to show that this degeneration of the Lacanian movement was no accident, but, on the contrary, that it is intrinsic to the teacher-student and

1. *Problems of Psychoanalytic Technique,* trans. David Rappaport (New York, 1941), p. 13.

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analyst-analysand relationship as such. Analysts can never produce autonomous analysands and teachers can never produce autonomous students: they can only produce servile disciples. Of course, it is not the case that these relationships inevitably result in domination and submission. The point is, rather, that while attainment of autonomy may be relatively rare and fraught with difficulty in these situations, it is not in principle impossible, as Roustang maintains. Here Castoriadis adduces what are to my mind devastating counter-examples: "Socrates never stifled Plato, and Plato never presented Aristotle with the mere choice between repetition [of the master's thought] or silence. Fichte did not drive Schelling to suicide, and Schelling did nothing to prevent Hegel from taking up an independent standpoint" (p. 64). Indeed, one is reminded here of Aristotle's statement made just prior to beginning his criticisms — which go quite deep — of Plato, his teacher of some 20 years: "Both are dear to us, but it is our sacred duty to honor truth more highly [than friends]."[2] It is an exemplary instance of the mastery of the Oedipal conflicts that are intrinsic to the mentor-student relationship. In this statement we can observe the disinvestment of a personalized relationship, which necessarily involves sexual and aggressive conflicts of the most intense sort, and the cathexis of the transpersonal object, truth.

This is not to say that the transference is resolved *absolutely*, that all vestiges of the past are completely mastered, that the unconscious becomes completely conscious and that one's relation to the present is thoroughly transparent. Such a claim would be absurd and would ignore totally the finite character of human existence. The point is, rather, that it does not follow from the impossibility of resolving the transference *absolutely* that it cannot be resolved *adequately* — i.e., "sufficient[ly] from the standpoint of use/need" (p. 60): "Resolution of the transference: if we take this phrase *haplos* (absolutely) then it might be claimed that it is impossible, like the 'resolution of the Oedipus Complex' — or the renunciation of the omnipotence of thought. . . . But it is lamentable to infer from this that the transference is therefore *never* resolved to *any essential extent*. The same goes, *mutatis mutandis*, for the relations between the conscious and the unconscious. Analysis is aiming neither at rendering the subject altogether 'transparent' to himself, nor at establishing the 'mastery' of the conscious over the unconscious; it is aiming at establishing *another relationship* between these two terms" (p. 108). It is again evident that the psychoanalytic skeptic, like the philosophical skeptic, is captivated by the problematic of the absolute, and how skepticism is simply the flip side of absolutism: "If we can't have the absolute," so the skeptic says, fuelled by a considerable dose of resentment, "we are left with nothing." Speaking psychologically, I would say this yearning for the absolute, which determines the entire problematic, is a remnant of infantile grandiosity, which must itself be worked through.

But Roustang wants to go even further and maintains that, as there can be no absolute mastery of the unconscious by the conscious, there is in principle no difference between psychosis and non-psychosis. All transformations and sublimations of the drives and the unconscious, so the argument goes, are illusory and reducible to their origins. Roustang is at least sophisticated enough to attempt to embrace the paradox of self-reference — to be sure, not with the finesse of a Nietzsche, a Wittgenstein, or an Adorno — and to define a theory as "the shared delirium of several people" (p. 48). This might indeed be a very accurate description of the theory of the Lacanians, as Castoriadis points out, but it does not solve the problem. Put simply, is Roustang's statement that theory is "the shared delirium of several people" itself a delirious statement? And, if so, what could that possibly mean? Castoriadis exposes the absurdity of Roustang's position with the following argument. According to Roustang's definition,

2. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1906a 16-17.

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the infantile "theory" that "birth takes place by way of the anus" ought to be a universal theory. "For the fantasy of anal birth is virtually universal: it is the 'delirium,' not of the 'several' but of almost everyone." The point is, however, that psychoanalysis is not fantasy, delirium or infantile "theories" of sexuality. It is *thought about* these things and many others as well. Indeed, the existence of fantasy, delirium and infantile theories of sexuality could not even be posited were there not "a primary and essential otherness which distinguishes fantasy from reality, representation under the control of pleasure/unpleasure from the truth, the psyche as radical imagination from the social historical world as the *other* of the psyche. . . . So the confusion of the hypercultivated year 1977 forces us to go once more through this laborious ABC" (p. 80).

Psychoanalysis, both theoretically and as a practical project, stands and falls with the question of sublimation, which, in turn, raises the question of the relationship of social-historical reality to psychic reality. Theoretically, as we have just seen, all discourse about autistic, private intra-psychic reality makes no sense unless we assume the existence of an objective, public, social world from which it can be talked about. And, practically, the whole clinical undertaking of psychoanalysis does not make any sense unless an answer can be given to the question of "the fate of the drives." How is it that these chaotic drives, which are churned up so violently in the course of an analysis, can become invested in social objects including "knowledge, creation, justice" (p. 37)? Castoriadis is quite right: it is one of the great scandals that there has been so little investigation of the subject of sublimation in psychoanalysis. Such an investigation would necessarily involve the relation of intrapsychic reality to the social reality, a subject that analysts have been historically reluctant to take up for several reasons. First, there has been the persistent belief that the introduction of the notion of extra-psychic reality would constitute a retreat from Freud's momentous discovery of psychic reality, which is taken as the hallmark of psychoanalysis. Witness the recent scandal around Masson. Secondly, there has been the simple fact of the conservatism of the analysts who have been unwilling to investigate the social-historical presuppositions of their own enterprise. We can see, however, that as long as the subject of sublimation remains unelaborated, it leaves the door open for the theoretical and practical distortions of a Lacan or a Roustang.

3) *Science.* Castoriadis' discussion of the philosophy of science is most interesting where it goes against the grain not only of the so-called post-empiricist philosophy of science, but of post-Kantian philosophy of science in general. After all, the problematic of the framework is essentially the Kantian problematic writ collective. The danger of a slide into total subjectivism, which was always latent in Kant, becomes actualized in some versions of the post-empiricist philosophy of science, albeit in terms of a collective subject. In certain important respects the pendulum has, in my opinion, swung too far in the opposite direction: with the debunking of the old positivism and the discovery that science always presupposes a hermeneutical substratum, the conclusion is often drawn that hermeneutics, in contradistinction to science, exhausts the field of knowledge. The disillusionment with the dogmatism of the old positivism often results in a hermeneutical relativism which is as one-sided as the position it replaces. Castoriadis' argument again moves in two directions. Against the positivists, he makes an argument that has become more or less familiar, namely, that while so-called normal science (and mathematics) can proceed in a manner that achieves enormous rigor and certainty, it is always embedded in a larger theoretical context which is intrinsically over-determined and *aporetic*; this context only becomes problematized when foundational questions are raised. As Castoriadis' more original

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contribution consists in his critique of the newer hermeneutical relativism, I shall concentrate more extensively on that part of his analysis.

His point, then, concerning the critique of positivism, is that the current disillusionment is at times as naive as the old dogmatic faith in the certainty of science. Indeed, Castoriadis' entire excursion into the *foundations* of mathematics — not mathematics itself, for which D'Amico wants to chide his amateur status — serves an essential function in the overall argument. (If D'Amico were correct, philosophers could only talk about metaphysics.) The excursion is meant to demonstrate that even mathematics, which is generally taken as the paradigmatic case of rigorous *episteme* that all the other sciences seek to emulate, is itself *aporetic* in its foundations. Moreover, this is not something that was only brought to light recently with Cantor and Gödel, although they did much to illuminate it. Contrary to the popular teaching, it was already recognized by Plato who "knew perfectly well that [mathematics] relied upon mere hypotheses" (p. 154). Indeed, Castoriadis argues that the best philosophers, scientists and mathematicians throughout history have regularly recognized that the foundations of their disciplines were by their very nature problematic. Again, this was not something that has only been recently discovered by Thomas Kuhn. Rather, it was something that had to be rediscovered after positivism's concerted effort to wish this fact away.

The appreciable anti-Kantian element we observed earlier in Castoriadis' philosophy is also evident in his criticisms of the hermeneutical relativists. An inference is often drawn from the discovery of the contextuality of scientific knowledge, that is, from the discovery that the development of science proceeds through a succession of, if not incommensurate, at least discontinuous frameworks: namely, that nature exists as entirely unorganized material upon which we can arbitrarily impose any framework we wish. Where questions concerning the conditions of the possibility of scientific development are raised, they are generally investigated from the side of the collective scientific subject, not from the side of nature. For example, it is asked: What are the features of Einstein's theory that allowed it to supersede and partially subsume Newton's? rather than: How must nature be organized to make such a transition possible?

Although he does not want to go as far as Adorno in this respect and attempt to speak from the side of the object, it should be apparent that Castoriadis wants to raise the question that was supposedly ruled out by Kant's Copernican Revolution:[3] What qualities are we compelled to presuppose about nature — and nature not simply as a phenomenon for us — to account for the conditions of the possibility of the history of science as we know it? "It is one thing to recognize that there is no order of the given that exists in itself and is absolutely compelling; that no question can arise of itself and have meaning outside a theoretical framework. . . ; but it is quite another thing to hypothesize implicitly that, facing this theory — or rather this interminable succession of theories — there is only an absolutely amorphous chaos, possessed of no organization of its own, and yet endowed with the astonishing power of adaptation to any order that theory might impose upon it. In fact, one has only to inspect this idea a little more closely to see that it is contradictory: in fact, as far as it is absolutely unorganized, the real would be definitely organi*zable*, and thus it would still be organized *and* organizable" (p. 173). The problematic is present in Kant himself and begins to explode the Kantian framework from within: as Jacobi had already observed, without the thing-in-itself we cannot enter Kant's philosophy, and with it we cannot remain there. The problem is that Kant wants to posit the mere existence of a completely indeterminate

3. See my "The Problem of Nature in Habermas," *Telos*, 40 (Summer 1979), pp. 45 ff.

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thing-in-itself without ascribing any qualities to it. However, when he speaks of the mere presentation of a manifold to sensibility, he has already begun to transgress his self-imposed limits. The very concept of a manifold seems to imply a manifold of things, that is, of organized entities. With this minimal implication it must already be the case that all organization and synthesis cannot be on the side of the subject. Kant should at least have said that the thing-in-itself is organized in such a way as to be amenable to the forms of sensibility and understanding. This is the point that Castoriadis wants to make, not with respect to the epistemological subject, but with respect to science: namely that nature must be constituted in such a way as to be at least amenable to the development of science as we know it.

The necessary existence of this minimal fit between nature and the structures of knowledge can neither be proven nor deduced. Rather, it is a "lucky accident" (*glücklicher Zufall* — p. 169), as Kant put it, which can, however, be *elucidated* on the basis of the fact of science. This may not be conceptually satisfying to the foundationalist purist nor to the skeptic (as a refutation of his position). However, to ask for such a proof or deduction is to move beyond the realm of philosophy from the standpoint of the finite mind into a realm structured by the presuppositions of the absolute. This brings us back to the double gap of underdetermination. The existence of this minimal fit between nature and the structure of our knowledge accounts for the moment of continuity in the development of science. However, as we observed earlier, if the being-thus of the world determines the frameworks that can be imposed on it, it does not determine them exhaustively. Just as the moment of underdetermination of *parole* by *langue* allows for the expressive use of language, so the underdetermination of our conceptual frameworks by nature allows for authentic scientific discovery — including the discovery of new paradigms.

It should be pointed out how demanding Castoriadis is in his account of natural science. Unlike some anti-positivist thinkers, most notably Habermas, Castoriadis is unwilling to settle for an instrumentalist interpretation of natural science, i.e., that it is simply a useful model that helps us manipulate our environment. He thus rejects the argument that scientific theories ought to be taken in an uninterpreted fashion, so that we would attend exclusively to the accuracy of their mathematical predictions. (This is often done to explain how an earlier theory can become a subtheory of a later theory that supersedes it, despite the fact that their basic assumptions are incompatible.) Castoriadis will not disregard the content of theories for he still insists that they tell us something about the being of nature.

One final point. I fear that this important book will not receive the attention it deserves precisely because of the qualities that make it so excellent. There is a distinction, which perhaps always made more sense in the French context but which is growing obsolete everywhere: namely, between an intellectual and an academic. It is possible for an intellectual to combine a worldliness and an independence of thought which is rarely attainable in the academy. To be sure, when the *Weltphilosoph* fails to achieve the rigor of the *Schulphilosoph*, he can descend to the level of a prophet. We need hardly point out, however, that the danger from the other side, i.e., that in the academy mere technical specialization will substitute for genuine rigor, is ubiquitous. At his best, the intellectual combines worldliness, independence and rigor in a fashion difficult to find in academic life, and it is this combination that, in large part, allows for Catoriadis' unique accomplishment. It is this same combination, however, that may cause some difficulty with the reception of the work. Not only does the book fall between many of the established political and academic categories, but, more critically, it goes against the

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grain of major tendencies in the current cultural scene. This is, in part, what I think D'Amico was reacting to. A trendy irrationalism has come to dominate much of what might still be seen as an adversary culture; it tends to view anything that is continuous with the socialist and rationalist strains of the Enlightenment as part of the problem rather than part of the solution. And while many of the micro-practices of the adversary culture may in fact be oppositional and even politically promising, its theoretical self-understanding is often so intrinsically hopeless and nihilistic that, were it taken seriously, it would render those practices — indeed, any practices — futile. Needless to say, much sophistry, masquerading as subversive thought, is required to obscure this contradiction. However unfashionable it may be, Castoriadis, precisely because he is so schooled in the philosophical tradition, is quick to spot and expose a sophism. To my mind, this remains a commendable trait.

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